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EDITED BY

JANET WATSON

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INTRODUCTION

Janet Watson

The essays in this volume continue an ongoing venture which began in 1994 at the University of Tasmania with the conference, "Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece", and the publication of the same name arising from it. These now biennial conferences bring together scholars from various disciplines within Classics united by their interest in the interrelationship between orality and literacy in the ancient Greek and Roman worlds.[1] The flourishing interest in this area of scholarship has increased awareness of the complexities involved in considering a phenomenon so intimately bound up with culture and period; in the Greek and Roman contexts, the uneven nature of the transition from "oral" to "literate"—it is rarely a case of one exclusive of the other—is now widely accepted and provides the overarching theme of this volume.

In the study of Homeric language, attention has tended to focus on a diachronic approach. Homeric Greek, however, was first and foremost a language delivered in performance before an audience, and in Chapter One, Egbert Bakker demonstrates the importance of considering this performative context for understanding the dynamics of Homeric language. The "closeness" of the Homeric simile's world to that of its audience, together with its strong preference for augmented aorist forms, has traditionally been interpreted as evidence for the late composition of similes. Bakker challenges this view;

[1] *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, ed. Ian Worthington (Leiden, 1995). The second conference, "Epos and Logos," took place at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa in 1996 and a selection of papers has been published in *Signs of Orality: Oral Tradition and its Influence in the Greek and Roman World*, ed. E. Anne Mackay (Leiden, 1999). The chapters in this present volume were originally delivered as papers at the third conference, again entitled "Epos and Logos," which was held at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, in July 1998. All papers selected for the volume were externally refereed. A fourth conference, "Epea and Grammata: Oral and Written Communication in Ancient Greece" convened by Ian Worthington and John Miles Foley, took place at the University of Missouri-Columbia, Missouri, 6–11 June 2000, and a publication is underway. The fifth conference is being organized by Dr Chris Mackie, and will take place at the University of Melbourne, Australia, in 2002.

his analysis of the data reveals a complex distribution of the augment in Homeric Greek which cannot be satisfactorily explained by the generalized division into narrative discourse (where unaugmented verbs prevail) and direct speech (where the augment is favored). This leads him to argue for the origin of the augment as a deictic used to express immediacy. In similes, the preference for augmented aorists is usually attributed to a gnomic, generic function; on the contrary, Bakker demonstrates that the augment's deictic function evokes the here-and-now reality of the simile in contrast to the heroic past of the narrative.

Homeric similes are also the focus of Chapter Two, but Elizabeth Minchin is concerned with the process whereby the language of similes is generated and recalled in performance. Her approach draws on recent research into cognition and memory, and offers a challenge to the view that similes are prepared verbal sequences committed to memory and recalled verbatim in performance. Rather, she elucidates the role visual memory plays in prompting verbal expression, then demonstrates how this interaction of image and word works in the creation of similes, and in turn how listeners process them. This leads into a discussion of the communicative aspects of the simile in performance: how the simile is "mapped" over the narrative; the extent to which the poet controls the audience's evaluation of the comparison, and what happens when a simile "overshoots the mark." This approach sheds light on the dynamics of language, performance and reception in oral poetry, and in so doing, solves some problems of interpretation which are seen to stem not so much from the content of the simile as from the process of its composition.

Precisely where the Homeric poems stand in the oral-literate continuum is much debated, but for those who believe that they are the works of an oral poet, even if he dictated the poems or was able to write, Milman Parry's oral-formulaic theory cannot be ignored. In Chapter Three, Mary Sale evaluates the significance of Parry's work for today, correcting two major flaws in Parry's argument. First, in a critique of Parry, she demonstrates the invalidity of Parry's shift from claiming that some systems of formulae (the noun-epithet systems) facilitate versification, to the claim that *all* formulaic systems do so. Secondly, she challenges Parry's definition of "essential ideas" as what remains after stripping away "stylistic superfluities"—the epithets—which led him to conclude that audiences were indifferent to the meaning of epithets. In tracing Parry's "essential idea" back to its probable origin in Aristarchus and Aristotle, Sale's revised definition

points up the context-free nature of the epithets of regularly-repeated formulae, which enables their use anywhere in the story, and thus their capacity to facilitate versification. Furthermore, this revised definition renders unnecessary the notion of audience indifference to their meaning; to reinforce this position, Sale proposes a poetics of repetition which accommodates both colorful and prosaic formulae. Finally, she offers a statistical analysis of the occurrence of context-free formulae in a sample of seven poems: three orally composed, three literate imitators of oral style, and Homer's *Odyssey*. The results demonstrate a marked drop in the incidence of context-free formulae in the literate imitators compared to the other poets, suggesting not only that the oral poets and Homer needed these formulae to facilitate versification, but also that, unlike the situation for the literate imitators, repetition was an accepted part of their aesthetic.

An ongoing debate in Homeric studies centers on how the Homeric poems became fixed texts, and consequently the status of textual variants found in various written sources. One side argues that a fixed text evolved after a period of rhapsodic performance, and sees textual variants as reflections of the process of recomposition in performance characteristic of oral and orally-derived poetry. As such, textual variants represent the multiformity of the poems' transmission, which ought to be acknowledged in our texts. The opposing view proposes an early date for a fixed text through oral dictation by the singer to a scribe, whereby the attempt to recover the archetype text provides the criterion for assessing the validity of textual variants. In Chapter Four, Mark Usher offers new evidence to support the principle of the former position from his examination of a work of late antiquity, Eudocia's *Homerocentones*. Eudocia's composition is stitched together from lines of Homer, yet, as Usher demonstrates, her skill in adapting the verses to her biblical theme is born of an intimate familiarity with the habits of Homeric composition. Of particular interest in relation to textual transmission are lines in Eudocia's Centos which have no exact equivalent in extant versions of the Homeric poems. Usher examines the range of explanations which may account for these verses of unknown source, and considers their value as evidence for viewing textual variants as possible performance alternatives. This study both illuminates the interaction between written and oral practice in late antiquity, and offers a new perspective in the debate on textual variants.

Homer and other archaic poets provide many examples of proverbial

expressions which share the same underlying thought, but which are rarely repeated in exactly the same words. In Chapter Five, André Lardinois argues that this is because ancient Greek proverbial expressions belonged to a living tradition wherein they were recreated in performance in much the same way as epic verse. To demonstrate his point, he analyzes the structure and content of a number of proverbs, or gnomai. He finds that certain standard themes recur, and that their expression is characterized by a limited number of formulae and lexical elements. Just how such proverbs were composed is illustrated through a detailed examination of the first three gnomai in Homer's *Iliad*, a discussion which embraces lexical and structural features, together with phonetic and metrical elements; the examination reveals a special language which would both help the speaker to create such sayings in performance and signal their gnomic nature to the audience. Finally, he illustrates how form and context interact in the creation of proverbial sayings. The flexibility of form enabled speakers to craft "traditional" pieces of wisdom in new ways to suit the context of their performance. In this way, the tradition was a living one, where its practitioners both drew on the received stock of elements and added to it.

The tension between continuity and variation which characterizes the Greek poetic tradition has considerable implications for the individual poet. The tradition embodied the transmission of generations of poets, and multiple, often conflicting versions of the same material; furthermore, with the spread of writing and the increasing availability of fixed texts, different versions of stories were open to greater scrutiny. Whilst the relative fluidity or fixity of the tradition may have affected the strategy adopted to deal with it, the perennial problem for individual poets, especially within a milieu of poetic competition, was how to convince their audiences that their particular version of a story was a valid one. In Chapter Six, Ruth Scodel approaches the problem with an analysis of the socially-embedded nature of ancient Greek storytelling and the criteria by which the truth of a story is evaluated. This reveals that the emphasis in evaluating a story was placed less on historical accuracy than on its application to the present, particularly insofar as the poet demonstrated his concern for the common good above his own interests. From this starting point, Scodel examines Homer and Hesiod in epic, and Pindar in epinician poetry, to illustrate the very different rhetorical strategies poets employed to establish their authority dur-

ing a period when an ephemeral oral tradition was gradually giving way to a coexistence of fixed text and oral tradition.

Ruth Scodel proposes in her conclusion that the emergence of fixed texts and the ensuing canon of stories evoked a critical response in poetry, and in Chapter Seven Robert Hannah pursues a similar line of enquiry in order to ascertain the possible connection between the growth of literacy and the development of abstract thought. He approaches this enquiry through tracing the development of the parapegma, or star calendar. From the earliest recorded examples in archaic poetry through to the late-fifth century BCE, star calendars evolved from practical, observation-based systems which aligned the constellations with the seasons, and seasonal activities such as farming, to more complex and abstract systems where the constellations were organized into zodiacal months. The impact of writing in this development, Robert Hannah suggests, pertained particularly to the benefits accruing from the creation of written lists, which promoted the separation of data from their practical context and, further, led to the subsequent manipulation of the data necessary for evolving a solar-based zodiacal system.

In Chapter Eight, Patricia Hannah examines an example of the written word used in the public sphere, tracing the history of the inscription on Panathenaic prize amphorae, and discussing its function over the four hundred years of its use. These amphorae, which contained the olive oil that was the prize for victors in the equestrian and athletic events at the Panathenaic games, were in use from the mid-sixth century to the second century BCE. During this period changes to the shape and decoration (including the inscription) were never so great as to detract from a seeming continuity of "brand image." In this context, Patricia Hannah considers the function of the inscription, in terms of what information it purports to convey, the audience for which it was intended, and its value in contributing to our understanding of the spread of literacy over the period of its use.

In Chapter Four Mark Usher demonstrates how Eudocia, a literate poet of the fifth century CE, was nevertheless intimately familiar with the habits of oral composition. Eudocia was creating her verses from Homer, but in Chapter Nine Steven Nimis' study of composition in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* provides corroborative evidence for the interaction between oral and literate practice in the novel. At issue is Longus' use of ring composition; viewed as a literary device, it is an organizational structure used to frame, and

focus attention on, a central point significant to the meaning of the work. As such, the meaning only becomes clear when the pattern is visualised as a whole. Ring composition, however, has been claimed as a feature of both written and oral composition, and Nimis counters the literary interpretation of its use in Longus with an analysis from the oralist perspective. Accordingly he argues that, far from functioning as a vehicle to promote meaning, ring composition is symptomatic of the process of composition whereby the patterns and repetitions serve the linear unfolding of the story. The application of this approach to Longus reveals not only his continuity with the Greek storytelling tradition but also his experimentation with it to meet the needs of a reading audience.

In the ancient world, the ability to speak effectively was paramount for the conduct of public life. More particularly, in Rome of the Republic and early Empire, a successful career in public life required a man to be both a skilled speaker and to uphold the values of the *bonus vir*. Training in declamation, therefore, was an important part of a young Roman's education, yet the surviving pedagogical texts in this area have tended to be criticized for their apparent shortcomings both in equipping boys for public speaking and in instilling Roman virtues. In Chapter Ten, Margaret Imber argues that the true value of these texts is realized only if they are examined in relation to the practice of declamation, and of particular value in this respect are the *controversiae*, which provide the title of the text and a brief statement of the facts concerning the conflict which has led to the lawsuit or tribunal hearing. Imber's analysis of the *controversiae* reveals their oral nature, whence she demonstrates their value as prompts for oral performance. Critics of this pedagogical approach have claimed that the fantastical world of the *controversiae* ill-prepared a boy for public speaking on contemporary issues, but Imber's discussion elucidates both the practical and ideological reasons for preferring fantastical to contemporary themes in declamatory training, and explains why this type of pedagogy survived in Roman schools for many centuries.

As this volume illustrates, investigation into orality and literacy in the ancient world entails a period of over a thousand years and impinges on varied aspects of intellectual and artistic life. These chapters present a cross-section of current research in this wide-ranging field of enquiry, and in drawing together its disparate facets they lead the way forward towards building a comprehensive picture of so complex a whole.

CHAPTER ONE

SIMILES, AUGMENT, AND THE LANGUAGE OF IMMEDIACY

Egbert J. Bakker

Any function we assign to the Homeric simile has to take into account the fact that similes evoke a reality that is different from that of narrative proper. As many commentators have noted, similes are "close" to the audience, in evoking a domestic, rather than heroic, reality.[1] Yet instead of exploring the narrative potential of this closeness, scholars have tended to focus, characteristically of a long tradition in Homeric scholarship, on the *lateness* of the Homeric simile, or on its non-traditional nature. Closeness has been seen as linguistic closeness, in the sense that the language of the similes belongs to the latest, most recent stratum of Homeric composition. The best known statement of this vision is G. P. Shipp's *Studies in the Language of Homer*. Shipp finds that similes contain few archaisms and many late forms, and concludes that "[t]he 'Homeric' simile must have a long history behind it, and it is a very natural view that its full development is later than the art of the narrative which it adorns."[2]

It is my conviction that the common conception of diachronic layering in Homer needs rethinking in light of our changing ideas on language and performance, though the present article is not the place to carry out such a project. Rather, I wish to concentrate on one particular "late" feature of the simile, which Shipp notes only in passing: the augment of the verb.[3] Augment, for those readers less familiar with the morphology of the Greek verb, is a feature commonly associated with past tense, appearing either as an extra syllable on

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[1] For example, M. Coffey, "The Function of the Homeric Simile," *American Journal of Philology* 78 (1957): 116; G. P. Shipp, *Studies in the Language of Homer*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1972), 212; M. W. Edwards, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 5: books 17–20 (Cambridge, 1991), 35–6.

[2] Shipp, *Studies*, 212.

[3] Shipp, *Studies*, 120, following P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, 3d ed., vol. 1 (Paris, 1958), 479–84.

verbs beginning with a consonant (syllabic augment, e.g., ἔ-λαβε) or as a long vowel on verbs beginning with a (short) vowel (quantitative augment, e.g., ἤκουσε). In Homer, verbs without the augment (i.e., λάβε and ἄκουσε, respectively) are more common than their augmented counterparts, but it has long been observed that verbs occurring in similes (in practice aorist verbs) are with very few exceptions augmented. The explanation offered for this observation has been obvious to many: given that augment in classical Greek texts is obligatory, the near-obligatory use of the augment in Homeric similes points to their lateness, insofar as the *absence* of augment is, uncontroversially, an archaic feature of Homeric discourse.

It is true that the lack of augment is an uncontroversial archaic feature of Homeric discourse, but my point in this chapter is that the presence of augment is by no means necessarily recent. Reopening a discussion that was conducted vigorously in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, I will try to demonstrate that more can be said about augment in Homer than that it is "late" or "metrically useful."[4] There is a narrative, semantic motivation for the use, or omission, of the augment, and the analysis of this semantic principle ought to have priority, I believe, over diachronic considerations. One of the key elements in my presentation is that the augment is apparently sensitive to narrative factors, that have not been taken into consideration by Shipp or any of his predecessors. After a preliminary discussion of those factors we will be in a position to take a fresh look at the "closeness" of the Homeric simile.

Revisiting the Augment

As a morphological category, augment is found on the aorist, the imperfect, as well as the pluperfect, and can be either syllabic or quantitative, as we have seen. In classical Greek, augment is the obligatory marker of past tense; in Homer, augment is commonly seen as optional in this same function. In some earlier publications, the possible absence of augment on verbs in Homer has been seen

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[4] See also the parallel argument in E. J. Bakker, "Pointing to the Past: Verbal Augment and Temporal Deixis in Homer," in *Euphrosyne: Studies in Ancient Epic and its Legacy in Honor of Dimitris N. Maronitis*, ed. J. N. Kazazis and A. Rengakos (Stuttgart, 1999), 50–65, focusing on some syntactic properties of augment not dealt with in the present chapter.

in terms of "loss" or "metrical license," the assumption being that the augmented forms are more basic than the unaugmented ones, historically and semantically.[5] But in more recent research it is argued that the unaugmented form is the basic one and that augment is originally an adverb preceding the verb, an innovation in some Indo-European languages including Greek and Indo-Iranian.[6] In his *Grammaire homérique*, Pierre Chantraine accepts the conception of augment as a morphological addition, rather than loss, and notes that the augment marks the past sense "more clearly" ("plus nettement") than do forms without the augment.[7]

Chantraine's idea of expressing the past "more clearly" is meant to make sense of a curious fact. It has long been observed that augment is not evenly distributed in Homer: augment is considerably more frequent in speeches than in narrative.[8] On the assumption that the augment means "pastness," Chantraine argues that the augment may be dropped in narrative, since the sense of "past" is given in this context: there would be no need to emphasize pastness when any verb is already past. In speeches, by contrast, where pastness is not given, it has to be established or emphasized by the augment.[9]

The sense of pastness, however, is by no means self-evident. Before Chantraine, some scholars have argued, quite to the contrary, that the augment has to do with the present. Arthur Platt (1891) notes that some aorists are better translated as perfects in English; he finds them mostly in speeches and observes that they mostly carry the augment. The augment would thus be similar in function to reduplication, and ἔδωκα and δέδωκα would have in common a nonpast sense.

[5] For example, D. B. Monro, *Grammar of the Homeric Dialect*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1891), 62; J. van Leeuwen, *Enchiridium dictionis epicae* (Leiden, 1918), 257. For a detailed history of scholarship on the augment, see L. Bottin, "Studio dell'aumento in Omero," *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-Anatolici* 10 (1969): 69–145 (subsequent developments reviewed in Bakker, "Pointing to the Past"), 52–56.

[6] See L. Basset, "L'augment et la distinction discours/récit dans l'*Iliade* et l'*Odyssée*," in *Études homériques*, Séminaire de recherche sous la direction de Michel Casevitz (Lyon, 1989), 11; W. P. Lehmann, *Theoretical Bases of Indo-European Linguistics*, (London, 1993), 244; Bakker, "Pointing to the Past," 53.

[7] Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, 1: 479.

[8] Going back at least as far as K. Koch, *De Augmento apud Homerum omisso*, (Brunswick, 1868); see also A. Platt, "The Homeric Augment," *Journal of Philology* 19 (1891): 211–37; Monro, *Grammar*, 62.

[9] Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, 1: 484, apparently following Monro, *Grammar*, 62; but note that in an appendix containing "notes and corrections" to the first edition of his *Homeric Grammar* (402), Monro endorses the findings of Platt, "The Homeric Augment" which run counter to Chantraine's position (see below).

On this basis, J. A. J. Drewitt even goes so far as to speak of augmented "present-aorists," as opposed to "preterit aorists" that are mostly found in narrative and are most often augmentless. Drewitt suggests that "originally the augment was an interjection or particle, which would mark some connexion with, or reference to, the present."[10]

The statistical tendencies on which Platt's and Drewitt's account is based require careful interpretation in light of the various factors involved (metrical, narrative, etc.). Yet the tendencies are sufficiently strong to merit more attention than they have received thus far. Part of the reason why Platt's and Drewitt's account of the augment in Homer has not reached the mainstream of Greek linguistics or of Homeric philology has no doubt been the lack of a theoretical, narrative framework within which it could be accommodated.[11] Another reason is the climate in which the discussion on Homeric linguistics and discourse was conducted at the turn of the century. Drewitt's findings were quickly drawn into the controversy between the Analysts and the Unitarians, and so abandoned in the changing tides of fashion in Homeric studies.[12] Drewitt himself invited this fate of his findings, in speculating on the relative age of certain passages or books on the basis of the percentage of augment—the assumption being that the more augmented verbs a given passage contains, the more recent it is—rather than exploring the narrative potential of the distinction he had posited.

The peculiar position of Homeric augment between the past and the present has recently been reexamined by Louis Basset (1989) in terms of the well-known distinction between *histoire* and *discours* made by the French linguist Émile Benveniste.[13] Observing that tense relations alone do not suffice to make sense of the system of the French verb, Benveniste introduces a distinction between two discourse modes, each coming with its own set of verbs. On the one hand there is *histoire* (or *récit*), an "objective" type of narrative, directed to its referential object, the past; on the other hand there is *discours*, a "sub-

[10] J. A. J. Drewitt, "The Augment in Homer," *Classical Quarterly* 6 (1912): 44; see also J. A. J. Drewitt, "A Note on the Augment," *Classical Philology* 8 (1913): 352.

[11] See also Basset, "L'augment et la distinction discours/récit," 13.

[12] Cf. A. Shewan, "The Homeric Augment," *Classical Philology* 7 (1912): 397–411, "The Homeric Augment Again." *Classical Philology* 9 (1914): 189–91; Drewitt, "A Note on the Augment." Unitarians like Shewan took issue with any differentiations that could be reduced to statistics.

[13] E. Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1966), 238–45.

jective" discourse mode that is a matter of speaking in the present. When reference to past events is made in this mode, the link of those events with the speaker's present will be stressed by means of perfect tense (*il a couru*), whereas *histoire* will present the events as "simple past," using the preterit (*il courut*). Later accounts have modified Benveniste's original opposition between "objective" and "subjective:" the notion of "source" or "center of vision" has been introduced, the vantage point which in the case of *discours* resides in the moment of utterance, whereas in the case of *histoire* it is the events themselves that provide the vantage point for their perception.[14]

Basset's proposal is to align the augmentless verb in Homer with the French *passé simple* as it is used in *histoire*, and augmented forms with the *passé composé*. This is an intriguing suggestion; the augmentless aorist belongs, just as the *passé simple*, to an older linguistic stratum and is confined to special discourse, formal writing in French, epic poetry in Greek. Moreover, the *histoire/discours* distinction seems at first sight to coincide with the distinction between Homeric narrative (with its numerous augmentless verbs) and characters' speech, where augment is more common.[15]

The basic distinction envisaged by Basset, as well as Platt and Drewitt, can be illustrated with the following contrastive pair:[16]

> τῆλε δ' ἀπεπλάγχθη σάκεος δόρυ· χώσατο δ' Ἕκτωρ (*Il.* 22.291)
>
> and the spear was driven far back from the shield, and Hektor was angered
>
> ὅς κ' εἴποι ὅ τι τόσσον ἐχώσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (*Il.* 1.64)
>
> who can tell why Phoibos Apollo is so angry

In the first extract the speaker is Homer, the narrator, and Hektor's emotion is, as narrative, an event that took place in another time and place. The verb χώσατο, which does not carry the augment, is an act of narration that reports, reduplicates, the original event. In the second example the speaker is Achilleus. His speech act pertains

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[14] Basset, "L'augment et la distinction discours/récit," 10.

[15] In E. J. Bakker, "Homeric ΟΥΤΟΣ and the Poetics of Deixis," *Classical Philology* 94 (1999): 1–19, Benveniste's distinction is brought to bear on a similar phenomenon, the use of the demonstrative οὗτος, which is significantly more common in speeches than in narrative.

[16] The translations of the examples are all from R. Lattimore, *The* Iliad *of Homer* (Chicago, 1951).

to the present situation; it does not refer to any previous anger of Apollo, but to the one that afflicts the army in the present. Apollo's apparent anger is the source and motivation for Achilleus' present speech act. We note that the verb ἐχώσατο carries the augment. Consider also the following extract, in which Diomedes addresses Hektor:

> ἐξ αὖ νῦν ἔφυγες θάνατον κύον· ἦ τέ τοι ἄγχι
> ἦλθε κακόν· νῦν αὖτέ σ' ἐρύσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων (*Il.* 11.362–3)
>
> Once again now you have escaped death, dog. And yet the evil came near you, but now once more Phoibos Apollo has saved you.

The three aorists ἔφυγες, ἦλθε, and ἐρύσατο, all augmented, do not refer to past events. The escape of Diomedes' intended victim is a matter of the present. Notice that the temporal adverb νῦν, the temporal adverb of the present, is used twice.[17]

Still, without further details, this account is not immune to the danger of circularity, since augmented aorists do occur in narrative and unaugmented aorists in characters' speech (see Table 1 below). It is true that sometimes the metrical form of the verb either precludes or necessitates the augment,[18] but this factor alone cannot account for all the exceptions. For Basset, the solution lies in a further modification of Benveniste's original conception: the distinction between *histoire* and *discours* has been shown to be too rigid, in that no discourse is either entirely *histoire* or *discours*. In practice, the center of vision will shift within a single narrative (sometimes within a single sentence), so that both the *passé simple* and the *passé composé* will occur in *histoire*.

However, for the application of *histoire/discours* to Homer to be convincing, we need criteria for the use of the augment deriving from Homeric discourse, rather than from an externally produced theory. In what follows I will present such criteria, on the basis of fresh sta-

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[17] The co-occurrence of νῦν with the augmented aorist is one of Drewitt's ("Augment in Homer," 44; "Note on the Augment," 351) main arguments for a "present-reference aorist;" cf. Monro, *Grammar*, 66.

[18] Augmentation may result in various metrically impossible forms, e.g., single short sequence (ἀγορήσατο, ἐνάριξε, ἐλέησε, ἐλελίχθη, ἐξαλάπαξεν, ἀπάτησε, etc.); triple short sequence (περονήσατο, τολύπευσε); antispast (metrical sequence ⏑ – – ⏑: βουλεύσατο, *Il.* 2.114). In all these cases augment is precluded for reasons of metrical word shape. Sometimes augment is distributed unevenly across a flexional paradigm because of metrical form, e.g., γένετο, βάλετο, where augment is impossible, against (ἐ)γένοντο, (ἐ)βάλοντο, where augment has it customary optional status. In other forms, such as ἀνείλετο, ἀφίκετο, or ἀπώλεσε, quantitative augment is metrically necessary to obviate the impossible sequence of four short syllables.

tistics: all the aorist and imperfect forms produced by the Chicago Homer Database have been entered into a database *(Access)* to which fields have been added for various narrative and metrical criteria.[19]

Special care has been taken to distinguish between the presence or absence of augment that is secured by the metrical conditions, and cases where augment is not metrically certain. For example, in the last citation from Homer, the augment on ἔφυγες is required under the given metrical conditions (likewise ἐχώσατο in the example before). The two other aorists, by contrast, have augments that are not metrically guaranteed. The first, ἦλθε, is what I call a case of indeterminate quantitative augment: this form is always printed as augmented in our editions, but the quantitative augment is not necessary, for ἔλθε would give the same meter.[20] The second one is a case of indeterminate syllabic augment. Our editions print σ' ἐρύσατο, and I think rightly so, but alternative word division, σε ῥύσατο, gives the same meter. In all these indeterminate cases the augment can go either way, and in some cases our editions differ precisely on whether or not they print the augment, reflecting manuscript variance that goes back probably to Antiquity itself.[21] In the statistics I have consistently excluded all these indeterminate cases, which explains why the two percentages in the tables below never add up to 100.

The present chapter does not allow me to present the data with the detail that it requires; I intend to publish this elsewhere. In order to save space, I have also excluded the material from the *Odyssey* altogether (but see note 31 below), and left out the imperfect, since this tense poses additional problems.

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[19] I wish to thank Martin Mueller (Northwestern University) for his generosity in helping me with the production and the transmission of the data and Geneviève Normandeau (Université de Montréal) for her assistance in building the database.

[20] The case of ἦρχε is similar (only at *Il.* 3.447 does the OCT print the augmentless form ἄρχε). In other cases, the OCT consistently prints the augmentless form (e.g., ὅρμησ' *Il.* 6.338; ὄπτησαν *Il.* 7.318; ὁρμηθήτην *Il.* 17.530; ὅρμηνεν *Il.* 21.137, etc.), presumably in keeping with Alexandrian scholarship that tended to remove augments where possible. Note that Mazon and Van Thiel print the augment in all these cases (ὥρμησ', ὤπτησαν etc.).

[21] Again the OCT tends to favor the augmentless variant, where other editions print the augment (e.g., *Il.* 16.294: OCT τοὶ δὲ φόβηθεν; Mazon τοὶ δ' ἐφόβηθεν; *Il.* 16.693: OCT θάνατόνδε κάλεσσαν; Mazon: θάνατόνδ' ἐκάλεσσαν). In other cases, the OCT and Mazon are in agreement where Van Thiel differs in printing the augment, e.g., *Il.* 16.250: OCT/Mazon τῷ δ' ἕτερον μὲν δῶκε πατήρ; Van Thiel τῷ δ' ἕτερον μὲν ἔδωκε. Note that compound verbs almost all belong to the indeterminate class: even though all our texts consistently print ἀπ-έδωκε, etc., the augmentless form (ἀπό-δωκε, etc.) is equally possible (see also Bakker, "Pointing to the Past," n. 37).

Charting Homeric Augment

Earlier research on Homeric augment has yielded three main observations, two of which have already been mentioned above:

(i) augment (on aorists) is relatively less common in narrative, and more common in characters' speech, and
(ii) augment (on aorists) is obligatory in similes.

In addition to these two it has been observed that

(iii) augment does not occur on verbs with the suffix –σκ-.

Not surprisingly, my own statistics confirm these findings; see Tables 1–3:

Table 1: Augment on the Aorist in Narrative and Characters' Speech in the *Iliad*

Total number of verbs	5795	
Augment required by meter	1476	25.47%
Augment ruled out by meter	2600	44.86%
Narrative	4541	
Augment required by meter	1045	23.01%
Augment ruled out by meter	2168	47.74%
Characters' speech	1250	
Augment required by meter	428	34.24%
Augment ruled out by meter	432	34.47%

Table 2: Augment on the Aorist in Similes[22]

Similes	103	
Augment required by meter	62	60.19%
Augment ruled out by meter	6	5.83%

[22] Drewitt ("Augment in Homer," 44) notes that there are sixteen unaugmented aorists in similes (in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined), three of which are "difficult" (*Il.* 3.4; 4.279; 15.682). Of these three I have classed *Il.* 3.4 (αἵ τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν χειμῶνα

Table 3: Augment on Aorists with the –σκ-suffix[23]

Aorist with –σκ-	37	
Augment required by meter	0	0%
Augment ruled out by meter	27	72.79%

Tables 2 and 3 reveal strong, diametrically opposed preferences. And yet all aorists in similes and all but four aorists with –σκ- occur in narrative. This raises the question whether "narrative" is not too broad and heterogeneous as a category, and we may ask the same question of characters' speech. Are there other types of context or kinds of verbs where augment is either as strongly preferred or avoided? It will appear that such categories do indeed exist. Together, these categories will enable us to piece together a picture of the function of augment in Homeric narrative that is more precise and verifiable than the simple contrast between *histoire* and *discours*, or narrative and character speech.

A further type of context that favors augment and where the figures are different from narrative in general is speech introduction. The occurrence of augment here is less automatic than in similes but still almost three times more frequent than the absence of augment. See Table 4:

Table 4: Augment in Speech Introduction

Speech introduction	371	
Augment required by meter	167	45.01%
Augment ruled out by meter	62	16.71%

φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον) as indeterminate (χειμῶν' ἔφυγον) since elision in the caesura is not impossible (cf. *Il.* 22.298). Of the remaining four instances, three involve the form ἧκε and its compounds (*Il.* 4.75; 21.523, 524) which I have classed as augmentless in view of the occurrence of ἕηκε(ν) (and compounds). I am not sure, however, whether this form was felt as augmentless at all stages of the transmission of the Homeric poems.

[23] The figures for –σκ- on the imperfect are equally strong; in addition to the only example of metrically required augment (*Od.* 20.7), my database reveals *Od.* 22.427. Note that the ban on augment on verbs with –σκ- extends beyond Homer, particularly in Herodotus, where –σκ- is still used as a free suffix, and where we find such forms as ἄγεσκον (2.174.1), κλέπτεσκε (2.174.1), πωλέεσκε (1.196.1), etc.

The preponderance of augment here is due in no small measure to the frequency of formulaic lines of the type

τὸν δ᾽ αὖτε προσέειπε θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη

and him she addressed, goddess gray-eyed Athene

The first hemistich τὸν δ᾽ αὖτε προσέειπε always precedes a noun-epithet formula and functions as what I have called elsewhere a "staging formula:" the phrase sets the scene for the appearance of a god or hero as well as for his or her noun-epithet formula in the metrical space of the hexameter. On the principle that formulas are the most perfect epic phrases, metrically, phonetically, and semantically, I suggest that the formulaic environment of this hemistich underlines the idiomaticity of augment in this type of context.[24]

Before attempting to provide an explanation for the use of augment in introductions of direct speech, or to determine what this type of context has in common with similes, I offer another segment of Homeric narrative whose figures are less equivocal than narrative as a whole. Quite often, verbs in Homeric narrative denote events that are off the narrative time-line, having occurred before the time of the action of the *Iliad*. Such events are recounted by the narrator as part of additional information about persons (e.g., in the Catalogue of Ships or in battle narrative) or objects. The following extract, the history of the scepter of Agamemnon, may serve as an example of this phenomenon:

ἔστη σκῆπτρον ἔχων τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων.
Ἥφαιστος μὲν δῶκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι,
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς δῶκε διακτόρῳ ἀργεϊφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ δῶκεν Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
αὐτὰρ ὃ αὖτε Πέλοψ δῶκ᾽ Ἀτρέϊ, ποιμένι λαῶν
Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνῄσκων ἔλιπεν πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ, (*Il.* 2.101–6)

He stood up holding the scepter Hephaistos had wrought him carefully.
Hephaistos gave it to Zeus the king, the son of Kronos,
and Zeus in turn gave it to the courier Argeïphontes,

[24] On staging formulas, see E. J. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca, 1997), 162–5; on the "perfectness" of formulas involving noun-epithet formulas, see Bakker, *Poetry in Speech*, 188. Some might object here that προσέειπε in the formula covers an older *προτί-ειπεν, so that the augment in the extant formula is an innovation. However, nothing prevents us from assuming augment in the older formula too (προτ-έειπεν). In that case the augment would be indeterminate for the purpose of my statistics.

> and lord Hermes gave it to Pelops, driver of horses,
> and Pelops again gave it to Atreus, the shepherd of the people,
> and Atreus dying left it to Thyestes of the rich flocks.

The first, augmentless, verb (κάμε) occurs in a relative clause, as is often the case with verbs in this function.[25] On account of its peculiar temporal reference, we might want to translate this verb with the pluperfect tense in English. After κάμε, there follow four instances of δῶκ(ε)(ν), of which the first has indeterminate augment (μὲν ἔδωκε being metrically possible); the augment on the remaining three is ruled out by the meter, as in the case of κάμε. Only with ἔλιπεν do we have a metrically unavoidable augment. This situation (lack of augment being four times as frequent as its presence) reflects the statistical situation in general for verbs with this narrative function:

Table 5: Augment on Backgrounded Verbs in the *Iliad*:

Event out of sequence	213	
Augment required by meter	34	15.96%
Augment ruled out by meter	139	62.26%

These figures are very similar to those for another, related, set of data: the use of aorist verbs in temporal subclauses introduced with ἐπεί (116 total; 19 augment required by meter = 16.37%;[26] 63 augment ruled out by meter = 54.31%). The temporal reference of such verbs is similar to that of the verbs of Table 5 in that the event they denote is backgrounded with respect to the event denoted by the main clause, and thus does not denote a single event on the narrative time-line.[27]

[25] Cf. also *Il.* 4.219; 5.735; 7.146, 220; 8.195, 386; 9.667; 11.353; 15.441; 16.143; 19.368, 390; 23.92; 24.30; *Od.* 5.321, 372; 6.228; 10.394; 12.302. None of the verbs in these cases carries the augment.

[26] Note that of these nineteen cases five are strictly speaking indeterminate; I have counted them as augment nevertheless since lack of augment would result in a spondaic verse end, strongly avoided in Homer, e.g., αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ διά τε σκόλοπας καὶ τάφρον ἔβησαν (*Il.* 8.343), where τάφρον βῆσαν would strictly speaking have been possible.

[27] On "backgrounding" and temporal subclauses in narrative, see E. J. Bakker, "Foregrounding and Indirect Discourse: Temporal Subclauses in a Herodotean Short Story," *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991): 225–47, with references to the relevant literature in discourse analysis.

When we now turn to characters' discourse, the most obvious distinction to be made is once more between narrative and speech. For besides speaking in a concrete situation, replying to interlocutors, and reacting to a concrete context, characters also tell stories. The following table presents all the verbs used by characters when they refer to the past or tell a story:

Table 6: Augment in Narrative Told by Characters

Narrative in char. speech	360	
Augment required by meter	77	21.38%
Augment ruled out by meter	195	54.16%

A quick comparison with the data of Table 1 reveals that a distinction between characters' narrative and characters' speech is meaningful; as far as augment is concerned, characters as storytellers are not very different from the narrator, at least in the *Iliad*. Predictably, when the narrative verbs are subtracted from the totals for character speech, the percentages become more pronounced than the total in the third batch of Table 1:

Table 7: Augment in Character Speech Proper

Character speech proper	890	
Augment required by meter	351	39.44%
Augment ruled out by meter	237	26.63%

Yet Tables 6 and 7 merely confirm the general trend that the frequency of augment goes up outside narrative contexts. In the case of character speech, too, we need, and can, be more specific. Subclauses introduced with ἐπεί occur in character speech as well, and their figures differ from the general trend: 55 instances; 19 augment required = 34.54%; 27 augment ruled out = 49.09%. In the case of character discourse, however, ἐπεί is not exclusively temporal, as it is in narrative: most often, the ἐπεί-clause is causal, specifying the grounds for a speaker's action, and is thus a matter of the present, e.g.:

῞Εκτωρ ἐπεί με κατ᾽ αἶσαν ἐνείκεσας οὐδ᾽ ὑπὲρ αἶσαν,
τοὔνεκά τοι ἐρέω· σὺ δὲ σύνθεο καί μευ ἄκουσον· (*Il.* 6.333–4)

Hektor, seeing you have scolded me rightly, not beyond measure,
therefore I will tell, and you in turn understand and listen.

Taken by themselves, these causal ἐπεί-clauses yield figures that are different from those for ἐπεί-clauses as a whole, and closer to the figures for character speech in Table 7: 39 instances; 17 augment required = 43.58%; 15 augment ruled out = 38.46%. More significantly, in the remaining clauses, augment is even more strongly avoided than in the ἐπεί-clauses of the narrator: 16 instances; 2 augment required = 12.5%; 12 augment ruled out = 75%. These clauses are temporal, rather than causal, and refer to a time other than the speaker's present situation. They naturally occur in characters' narratives, but not necessarily so: they may also occur outside narrative contexts, e.g.:

νῦν δ᾽ ἔτι καὶ μᾶλλον νοέω φρεσὶ τιμήσασθαι,
ὃς ἔτλης ἐμεῦ εἵνεκ᾽, ἐπεὶ ἴδες ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
τείχεος ἐξελθεῖν, ἄλλοι δ᾽ ἔντοσθε μένουσι. (*Il.* 22.235–7)

I am minded even more within my heart to honour you,
you who dared for my sake, when your eyes saw me, to come forth
from the fortifications, when the others stand fast inside them.

The apparent avoidance of augment in temporal ἐπεί-clauses in characters' speech is remarkable, since this type of context is *discours* by Benveniste's principle, and should favor the augment according to Basset's application of it. Nor is this the only subcategory of character discourse for which this is true. It appears that aorists in negative contexts tend to disfavor the augment, both in narrative (whether told by the narrator or by the characters) and in discourse. An example from the latter is:

ὦ γέρον οὔ πω τόν γε κύνες φάγον οὐδ᾽ οἰωνοί, (*Il.* 24.411)

Aged sir, neither have any dogs eaten him, nor have the birds

In negated contexts the statistics for negated verbs in characters' speech are almost the reverse of those for characters' speech in general:

Table 8: Augment on Negated Verbs in Character Speech

Verb under negation	63	
Augment required by meter	14	22.22%
Augment ruled out by meter	27	42.85%

In summary, then, the findings yielded by the *Iliad*-aorist database are as follows:

Augment is favored in:

- discourse pertaining to a speaker's "now;"
- speech introductions;
- similes;
- proverbs and general statements.

By contrast, augment is disfavored, avoided, or prohibited in:

- verbs denoting events other than narrative, time-line events;
- verbs in ἐπεί-clauses in narrative and in temporal ἐπεί-clauses in discourse;
- negated verbs;
- verbs with the distributive-iterative suffix –σκ-.

I will now attempt to formulate the common denominator of these two groups as a cue to the meaning of verbal augment in Homer and in early Greek.

The Near, the Actual, the Visualized

When Achilleus mentions Apollo's anger amidst the pestilence with which the Greek camp is struck, or when Diomedes exclaims about Hektor's narrow escape (see the examples above), they are asserting events that make up their actual present. But this is no less true of the Homeric narrator himself when he introduces Achilleus or Diomedes saying these things. Through their words, these heroes become just as present to the audience as are the plague and the fighting to themselves: their very words sound again, mimetically reproduced by the performer, to become a presence "here and now." In fact, the "here" is no less important than the "now." In what follows, I shall argue that this immediacy in time and space is the per-

tinent factor in the use of the augment in its original function.

We saw that for Platt and Drewitt there is a connection between the augmented aorist and "present tense" which is statistically manifest in that augment is more common in character speech and less common in narrative. The distribution of the augment across the various subdivisions presented in the previous section, however, suggests that "tense" may as such not be the appropriate dimension. Instead, I suggest that in Homer there are clear traces of an original function in which the augment expressed the actual occurrence of an event in a specific time and place. In other words, I am suggesting that *verbal augment originally was a deictic suffix marking an event as "near" with respect to the speaker's present and immediate situation.* The augment marks not so much present tense as closeness, positive, observable occurrence. As such, the augment on aorists as it is used in Homer is part of a wider array of linguistic expressions (including deictic demonstratives and evidential particles) which together make up what could be called the language of immediacy, the linguistic means at a speaker's disposal to react to his or her immediate environment.[28]

I believe that the predominance of augment in speech introductions and in speeches themselves is a sign of this deictic function. But the relative scarcity of augment in other contexts is equally revealing. To start with verbs with the –σκ-suffix, the total absence of augment here is immediately explained by the iterative-distributive meaning of the suffix: a morpheme marking that an action is performed repeatedly or by more than one person is inherently incompatible with a deictic marker denoting concrete, positive occurrence within a speaker's perceptual orbit.

Furthermore, the marked absence of augment on verbs denoting backgrounded events can equally be explained as a lack of deixis, of closeness. In the extract cited above, the poet informs us that

[28] See also E. J. Bakker, "Discourse and Performance: Involvement, Visualization, and 'Presence' in Homeric Poetry." *Classical Antiquity* 12 (1993): 15–25; Bakker, *Poetry in Speech*, 74–80; E. J. Bakker, "Storytelling in the Future: Truth, Time, and Tense in Homeric Epic," in *Written Voices, Spoken Signs*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker and Ahuvia Kahane (Cambridge, Mass. 1997), 17–23; E. J. Bakker, "Verbal Aspect and Mimetic Description in Thucydides," in *Grammar as Interpretation: Greek Literature in its Linguistic Contexts*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker (Leiden, 1997), 16–20; E. J. Bakker, "Homeric ΟΥΤΟΣ and the Poetics of Deixis." *Classical Philology* 94 (1999): 1–19; on augment, see also Bakker, "Pointing to the Past."

Agamemnon's scepter has been made by Hephaistos and that this precious object passed from hand to hand, from father to son. These are events in the past, but they are not important *qua* events. Nor is it important *when* they happened; we just need to know *that* it happened in some other time, in order to appreciate the value of the object. Note also that many of these backgrounded verbs occur in relative clauses of the type τήν οἱ πόρε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων "which Phoibos Apollo had provided him," *Il.* 1.72: the identification of an object has priority over the assertion of an event.

The deictic nature of the augment in its original function also explains the preponderance of unaugmented verbs in contexts where negation obtains. The assertion that an event did *not* occur is of course not a context that is favorable to the speaker's pointing to that event, nor to the morphology of deixis. However, negation is in and of itself not a factor precluding the use of the augment. There are verbs under negation whose augment (metrically guaranteed) seems to be used in accordance with the deictic nature that I have just described. Consider the following pair. In both extracts the speaker is Pandaros referring in two different ways to his first attempt to kill Diomedes:

> καί μιν ἔγωγ' ἐφάμην Ἀϊδωνῆϊ προϊάψειν,
> ἔμπης δ' οὐκ ἐδάμασσα· θεός νύ τίς ἐστι κοτήεις (*Il.* 5.190–1)
>
> and I said to myself that I had hurled him down to meet Aidoneus,
> yet still I have not beaten him; now this is some god who is angered.
>
> ἦ μάλα σ' οὐ βέλος ὠκὺ δαμάσσατο, πικρὸς ὀϊστός·
> νῦν αὖτ' ἐγχείῃ πειρήσομαι αἴ κε τύχωμι. (*Il.* 5.278–9)
>
> you were not beaten then by the bitter arrow, my swift shot.
> Now I will try with the throwing-spear to see if I can hit you.

In the first extract Pandaros tells about his experience of the moment:[29] he thought he had already killed Diomedes, but apparently a god was on the latter's side. Pandaros' οὐκ ἐδάμασσα "kill him I did not" is as regards deixis equivalent to Diomedes' own ἔφυγές με "you've escaped me" in the example cited above: the non-occurrence of something strongly anticipated is *as such* an event that attracts attention. In other words, the situation in which Pandaros could have

[29] The killing attempt is described by the narrator at 5.95–106; note the τὸν δ' οὐ βέλος ὠκὺ δάμασσεν at 5.106.

shouted ἐδάμασσα! "I've killed him!" unexpectedly did not occur. In the second extract, on the other hand, Pandaros has taken some distance: the non-occurrence is now a (negative) fact from the past, contrasted with the new attempt in the present. Consider also the following pair:

> οὐ γάρ πω τοίους ἴδον ἀνέρας οὐδὲ ἴδωμαι,
> οἷον Πειρίθοόν τε Δρύαντά τε ποιμένα λαῶν (*Il.* 1.262–3)
>
> Never yet have I seen nor shall see again such men as these were,
> men like Peirithoös, and Dryas, shepherd of the people.
>
> οὐ γάρ πώ ποτέ μ' ὧδε θεᾶς ἔρος οὐδὲ γυναικὸς
> θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περιπροχυθεὶς ἐδάμασσεν (*Il.* 14.315–6)
>
> For never before has love for any goddess or woman
> so melted about the heart inside me, broken it to submission as now.

In the first extract Nestor is saying that he has never seen the likes of Peirithoös or Dryas, and the negated verb denotes the non-event for which the augmentless verb seems to be the appropriate expression. In the second extract, Zeus is saying that he has never been so much stricken with desire as he is *now*: the non-event has occurred in the past and is contrasted with the very positive and concrete occurrence of eros in the present. The occurrence of augment in negated contexts, where augment is generally disfavored, then, is equally revealing as the scarcity of augment in negated contexts in general as opposed to character speech as a whole. In other words, what seem to be mere exceptions may in fact be a confirmation of the rule.

If we accept the areas of strong and weak augmentation as anchors or guidelines, we are in a position to reassess the use of augment in Homeric narrative as a whole. As appears from Table 1 above, narrative is predominantly augmentless, and I would suggest that what is true of Hephaistos' scepter is true to a lesser degree of epic narrative as a whole: heroic events occurred in some other time beyond the performer's and audience's experience and mental grasp; besides, they are known from the epic tradition, and are commemorated rather than asserted: the precise identification of *what* happened is less important than the (re)confirmation *that* it happened.[30] In this respect the statistics for augment on aorists in Odysseus' narrative

[30] See also Bakker, "Storytelling in the Future," 28–9.

(*Odyssey* 9–12) are instructive: whereas the figures for narrative discourse in general in the *Odyssey* are not very different from that in the *Iliad* as presented in Table 1, in the *apologoi* there is significantly more augmentation.[31] This fact was known to the Analysts, and explained by them as a sign of the lateness of this part of the *Odyssey*.[32] Against this view I would point out that as a first-person, experiential report, dealing with events in real, lived-in time, Odysseus' narrative is quite fundamentally different from that of the epic poet. And the difference in augmentation would seem to confirm this.

As regards the sizable portion of verbs in Iliadic (and Odyssean) narrative that do carry the augment, it seems justified to see them, with Basset, as moments of *discours*, in which the performer pretends that the event is within his and the audience's perceptual orbit.[33] Two important provisos, however, are in order. The distribution of augment on aorists seems sufficiently sensitive to the contextual factors that I have outlined to warrant the deictic function that I have assigned to the augment, but

- meter cannot be ruled out as a factor: the metrical form of words often enforces or prohibits the use of the augment, irrespectively of any semantic or narrative function (see note 18 above); furthermore, the contextual conditions under which deixis is required or meaningful are sufficiently vague and subjective—one can always *imagine* that deixis is required—for augmented forms to be used at times as metrical doublets of unaugmented forms, for the purpose of versification;
- the historical development of augment in the langue from deictic marker to its generalized use as marker of past tense is a complicating, and complicated, factor; we have to allow for interference between the inherited, archaic idiom described here and the contemporary developments in the ordinary language.

Similes, Proverbs, and the Language of Immediacy

These two considerations require a detailed discussion that would lead us far beyond the limits of the present chapter. Instead, I return

[31] Of the 793 aorists in Odysseus' story, 284 verbs have an augment that is guaranteed by the meter (= 35.81%), whereas on 644 verbs augment is ruled out by meter (= 31.58%).

[32] Drewitt, "A Note on the Augment," 352.

[33] This is true in spite of the fact that augment as such does not constitute *discours*: as we saw, augment can perfectly be absent, e.g., in negated contexts, in what is *discours* by any standard.

to the simile, the context type that was missing in the previous section, and one of the acknowledged sectors of high augmentation in Homeric narrative. The account of augment in terms of deixis in the immediacy of a speaker's situation runs into direct conflict with a long-standing approach to similes and the aorists they contain: the temporal orientation of similes has been viewed as *timeless* and the augmented aorists as *gnomic*, lacking specific temporal reference, though scholars have often been uneasy about attributing this force to what they felt is a past tense.[34] Sometimes a semantic connection between the "gnomic" aorist and the –σκ-suffix is posited.[35] If the account of augment in terms of deixis presented here has any validity, this position is untenable: whereas aorists with the –σκ-suffix are devoid of deixis, aorists in similes are replete with it, as I shall argue.

Let us first observe that the same obligatorily augmented "gnomic" aorists occur in general statements and aphorisms. In contradistinction to similes, such statements are not confined to the discourse of the narrator. In the *Iliad* for example, Menelaos closes his menacing speech to Euphorbos ("Back off before any harm is done to you!") with the aphorism ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω "once a thing is done the fool has understood it", which features an augmented aorist.[36] An example of a longer "gnome" is Poulydamas' priamel:

ἄλλῳ μὲν γὰρ <u>ἔδωκε</u> θεὸς πολεμήϊα ἔργα,
ἄλλῳ δ' ὀρχηστύν, ἑτέρῳ κίθαριν καὶ ἀοιδήν,
ἄλλῳ δ' ἐν στήθεσσι <u>τιθεῖ</u> νόον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς
ἐσθλόν, τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἐπαυρίσκοντ' ἄνθρωποι,
καί τε πολέας <u>ἐσάωσε</u>, μάλιστα δὲ καὐτὸς <u>ἀνέγνω</u> (*Il.* 13.730–344)

To one man the god <u>has granted</u> the actions of warfare,
to one to be a dancer, to another the lyre and the singing,
and in the breast of another Zeus of the wide brows establishes

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[34] On the "gnomic" aorist, see B. A. van Groningen, "Quelques considérations sur l'aoriste gnomique," in *Studia varia Carolo Vollgraff a discipulis oblata* (Amsterdam, 1948), 49–61; Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, vol. 2 (Paris, 1963), 187; A. E. Péristérakis, *Essai sur l'aoriste intemporel en grec*, diss. (Paris, 1962), C. J. Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique." Études sur la syntaxe grecque* (Amsterdam, 1971), 257–65; H. N. Pelliccia, "The Structure of Archaic Greek Hymns" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1986); K. L. McKay, "Aspectual Usage in Timeless Contexts in Ancient Greek," in *In the Footsteps of Raphael Kühner*, ed. A. Rijksbaron, H. Mulder, and G. C. Wakker (Amsterdam, 1986), 193–208. For Ruijgh (*Autour de "te épique,"* 264) the obligatory augment on "gnomic" aorists is explained by the supposition that the gnomic aorist must have come into being at a moment at which augment had already become obligatory in the language.

[35] For example, Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique,"* 257.

[36] *Il.* 17.32; cf. *Il.* 20.198; Hes. *WD* 218.

wisdom, a lordly thing, and many take profit beside him
and he has saved many, and in particular he has recognized this himself.

We see here augmented aorists (ἔδωκε, ἐσάωσε, ἀνέγνω) alongside the present (τιθεῖ), for which sometimes the characterization "generic" is used, in line with the gnomic nature of the aorist. It is true, of course, that these sayings are not first time observations: prior experience and general knowledge of the world is involved. Yet it remains to be seen whether this general knowledge is as such the crucial element in the meaning of the verbs or even of the proverb as a whole. I believe that our preoccupation with the generic, "gnomic," or timeless nature of aphorisms as they are used in oral traditions derives from our own literate conception of language: we tend to view the proverb as a proposition, in terms of its semantic content. In this way, we see the fool in Menelaos' aphorism or the persons mentioned in Poulydamas' priamel as generic types, in accordance with the "gnomic" reading of the aorists.

Yet aphorisms are no mere containers of wisdom or common knowledge. Their being uttered, performed, in a concrete situation is no less important than their propositional content, and it is performance and situatedness, I believe, that constitutes the crucial factor in the use of the augmented aorist in aphorisms and similes.[37] The common experience underlying the proverb, once it is verbalized, performed in a concrete situation, becomes highly specific, just as specific as the performance context itself. In this way, the proverb is no different from language in general and formulaic language in particular: a word or phrase that has been used countless of times brings the accumulated mass of its previous occurrences to bear on the speaker's present. The νήπιος in Menelaos' aphorism is not just the generic fool, but Euphorbos himself in case he does not heed the speaker's words. Similarly, the various types of human excellence in Poulydamas' priamel may be generic as general knowledge, but in the actual context of utterance they become instantiated in Hektor's prowess in battle and Poulydamas' excellence in counsel, the latter

[37] For recent investigation of proverbs in terms of context and performance, see A. Lardinois (this volume, and "Modern Paroemiology and the Use of Gnomai in Homer's *Iliad*," *Classical Philology* 92 [1997]: 213–34), and J. Russo, "Prose Genres for the Performance of Traditional Wisdom in Ancient Greece: Proverb, Maxim, Apothegm," in *Poet, Public, and Performance in Ancient Greece*, ed. L. Edmunds and R. W. Wallace (Baltimore, 1997).

being enacted by the speaker's very words. The pertinence of either "gnome" is that of a concrete observation which is warranted by previous experience. These are facts with diachronic, experiential depth, but as facts pertinent to a speaker's situation, they are no different from Diomedes' "You've escaped me!" in the example cited earlier. Against the conception of the "gnomic aorist," then, I submit that someone uttering a proverb is not so much saying "This is how it always goes" as "This is how it goes *now*, and my proverb has proved to be the best way to describe the present situation."

Turning now to the simile, we note the same configuration of tenses (augmented aorist with the present), for example:

> ὡς δ' ὅτ' ὄνος παρ' ἄρουραν ἰὼν ἐβιήσατο παῖδας
> νωθής, ᾧ δὴ πολλὰ περὶ ῥόπαλ' ἀμφὶς ἐάγῃ,
> κείρει τ' εἰσελθὼν βαθὺ λήϊον· οἱ δέ τε παῖδες
> τύπτουσιν ῥοπάλοισι· βίη δέ τε νηπίη αὐτῶν·
> σπουδῇ τ' ἐξήλασσαν, ἐπεί τ' ἐκορέσσατο φορβῆς· (*Il.* 11.558–62)
>
> As when a stubborn donkey going in a cornfield has forced his will upon some boys,
> and many sticks have been broken upon him,
> but he gets in and goes on eating the deep grain; and the children
> beat him with sticks, but their strength is infantile, yet at last
> by hard work they drive him out when he is glutted with eating

Here, too, the present and the aorist have been associated with the timeless and generic. Yet at the same time scholars have used such epithets as "concrete" and "vivid" to characterize the effect of similes, and stressed their intensely visual nature. Just as in the case of the aphorisms, I argue that timelessness and previous experience enhances the impact of the simile in the present. The effect of the simile quoted above depends, of course, on common, generic knowledge of donkeys and their behavior. It is true also that there is a strong, experiential association between the various details (the grazing donkey, the useless force of the children, etc.).[38] Yet as an image visualized, created in the epic performance and jointly watched by the poet and the audience, the donkey and its behavior cannot but become highly specific. The sharpness of the image derives from

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[38] The expression of this strong bond between various ideas would seem to be the appropriate domain of the particle τε. See Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique,"* 15–17 on the origin of epic τε as a connector. Ruijgh rightly proposes that the expression of a *fait permanent* is as such secondary with respect to the function of the particle to express the automatic link between two given ideas. See also note 40.

common knowledge, but should not be confused with it. The present tense and the augmented aorist do not express, as "gnomic" tenses, the common knowledge; they pertain to the image and its presence in the performance, as it is visualized and perceived by the poet and his audience.

Conveying propositional information of the type "This is how donkeys always behave," then, is not at all the poet's point in performing the simile cited above. Nor is Aias actually compared to a donkey, or the Trojans to boys. Rather, the simile is a verbalized image that *as an integrated whole* serves to illustrate a salient scene from the Iliadic battle. Often the simile goes beyond mere illustration. The art of the Homeric simile lies in the tendency to strain the similarity by looking for unexpected connections between the two scenes, the epic and the domestic one. The grazing donkey in the simile cited above, or the mother cow standing over her first-born calf (*Il.* 17.3–6), force the audience to realize the essence of Aias' retreat and of Menelaos defending Patroklos' body: the epic world comes alive in a surprising and revealing light.

But irrespective of the originality of the poet's penetrating vision, the linguistic articulation of similes is one of immediacy. The present tense and augmented aorists in the similes evoke, indeed presuppose, *presence*. There is therefore no need to suppose a separate category of "gnomic" aorists; such a category derives from our own preoccupation with knowledge and propositional content.[39] From the standpoint of the Homeric performance (and of a more pragmatic conception of language in general), the augmented aorists in similes do not differ from the aorists in characters' discourse as I have discussed it earlier: speech action in a concretely perceived and experienced present.

Returning to the common view of the "lateness" of the Homeric simile, the preceding examination of augment suggests, quite to the contrary, that similes contain an "archaic" feature for the expression of the immediacy of events. Rather than pointing ahead to the stage of the language in which augment has become the obligatory marker of past tense, the similes contain a tangible trace of a system of verbal semantics in which time and tense (past vs. present) is not so much important as space (far and near). Yet apart from this reversal, and

[39] On the distinction between knowledge and perception as modalities underlying a discourse, see further Bakker, "Verbal Aspect," 16–17.

moving beyond questions of "young" and "old," my account of tense and verbal augment might suggest a liberating and more promising approach to the Homeric simile or to Homeric discourse in general. Similes are set apart from narrative as a different register, as a way of speaking in which the performer adopts a different tone and stance and communicates more directly with the audience.[40] Such an approach would concur with a recent proposal which argues that the simile represents a different performance register effecting shifts in the narrative.[41] Yet however that may be, and whatever the actual "provenance" of similes, the different experiential load of similes has semantic and communicative consequences whose study should take priority over the usual and unreflectively applied conception of diachronic "layering." The poet may stand apart from his audience in receiving the vision of the Muse; but he is one of them in sharing a world that is indispensable as a stepping-stone to the past.

[40] In this connection it is interesting to note that the particle τε has been analyzed (A. Bloch, "Was bedeutet das 'epische' τε?" *Museum Helveticum* 12[1955]: 145–53) as an archaic form of the personal pronoun of the second person (cf. τοι) with a modal adverbial force "as you know."

[41] R. P. Martin, "Similes and Performance," in *Written Voices, Spoken Signs*, ed. Egbert J. Bakker and Ahuvia Kahane (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 138–66. Martin notes that many of Shipp's (*Studies*) "late" features are actually parallels with other poetic traditions (Pindaric praise poetry; Theognidean elegy), and argues that similes derive from lyric poetic traditions that have been incorporated in Homeric epic.

CHAPTER TWO

SIMILES IN HOMER: IMAGE, MIND'S EYE, AND MEMORY

Elizabeth Minchin

In this paper I shall examine from a cognitive perspective a typical if not a defining feature of the epics: the Homeric simile.[1] My purpose is to draw into this discussion, which has been for the most part descriptive or taxonomic, some evidence of a different kind.[2] My principal preoccupations will be the interactive relationship between imagery, which is at the heart of the simile, and memory—the way in which memory prompts an image, the way in which imagery and memory guide the expression of the simile, and the way in which imagery promotes recall—and the working out of this relationship in the Homeric simile. In short, I shall observe how a storyteller who is performing before a listening audience works with the resources of memory to generate this kind of comparative material, which draws on both imagery and language. This, it is clear,

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[1] For this claim, see R. P. Martin, "Similes and Performance," in *Written Voices, Spoken Signs: Performance, Tradition, and the Epic Text*, ed. E. J. Bakker and A. Kahane (Cambridge, Mass., 1997), 139, who demonstrates the close relationship between the language of lyric poetry and that of the Homeric similes and suggests that this may explain why the extended simile is unique to Homeric epic alone among the epic traditions. Martin's study, along with that of L. Muellner, "The Simile of the Cranes and Pygmies: A Study of Homeric Metaphor," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 93 (1990): 59–101, marks a new interest in similes in Homer.

[2] For studies of similes of a taxonomic kind, see W. Scott, *The Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile* (Leiden, 1974); and C. Moulton, *Similes in the Homeric Poems* (Göttingen, 1977). For an excellent, though relatively brief, overview of similes, see M. Edwards, "Similes," chap. 12 in *Homer: Poet of the* Iliad (Baltimore, 1987). Earlier studies again are those of H. Fränkel, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse* (Göttingen, 1921; reprinted 1977); M. Coffey, "The Function of the Homeric Simile," *American Journal of Philology* 78 (1957): 113–32; D. J. N. Lee, *The Similes of the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey *Compared* (Melbourne, 1964); G. P. Shipp, *Studies in the Language of Homer* (Cambridge, 1972), chap. 6; and see also C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London, 1952), who devotes some pages to this device and its functions in a number of epic traditions. Fränkel's study of similes, as a comprehensive account of the content of the similes, is a landmark in itself. My discussion, however, will rarely refer to his work, as it has been my aim to move the discussion from the intuitive to a more empirical level.

is not a literary study. Rather it will be conducted in that interesting zone where the humanities and cognitive studies come together.[3] My discussion will advance in three stages: first, I shall give an account of the importance of imagery in mental functions; then I shall discuss similes as a general phenomenon in discourse; third, I shall consider the simile in the context of the oral traditional epics which we associate with the name of Homer.

Imagery

Nearly all of us are able to bring to mind images of people we know, events we have experienced, and items we have seen in the past. We keep a store of such visual information in memory and from this store we are able to generate images. Although we do not actually see the images which we summon up, we do visualize them. Allan Paivio uses the popular phrase "mind's eye" as a metaphor for the processes of visual memory which make such visualization possible.[4] I shall use the term throughout this discussion.

Given that memory is not only the storehouse of imagery but also the seat of language, we might ask ourselves how imagery and language interact *vis-à-vis* memory. For some years Paivio has been investigating the roles of imagery and language in regard to memory and thought, and has observed that imagery has special advantages over language and linguistic processes.[5] He states, on the basis of evidence from numerous experiments, that it is easier to bring to mind and to remember "pictureable" material than it is to recall less "pictureable" material; and that mental images are more effective

[3] A key text here is that of A. Paivio, "The Mind's Eye in Arts and Science," *Poetics* 12 (1983): 6, who states that his study considers memory and imagery together because "imagery itself is a memory phenomenon". Paivio's paper is a useful introduction to this field of cognitive research. For a comprehensive survey of recent work on imagery and memory and its application to oral song, see D. Rubin, "Imagery," chap. 3 in *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (Oxford, 1995).

[4] See Paivio, "The Mind's Eye." For discussion, see M. Farah, "Is Visual Imagery Really Visual? Overlooked Evidence from Neuropsychology," *Psychological Review* 95 (1988): 307–17, who discusses the phenomenology of "seeing with the mind's eye." She concludes that imagery is visual in the sense of "using some of the same neural representational machinery as vision."

[5] Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 6.

as a mnemonic device than verbal techniques such as rote rehearsal.[6] That is, material which is high in imagery value is easier to remember than abstract material.[7] Paivio points out, too, that concrete words and the images they evoke are valuable as retrieval cues for other associated information.[8] They can be used as symbols for broader concepts which can be organized around them. Thus an image can serve as a reference point, or peg, for other information.[9] Furthermore, Paivio notes that mental images are dynamic.[10] We can transform them or manipulate them; we can scan a scene which we hold in the mind's eye; we can focus on events to one side; and we can move back and forward through sequences with little effort. And yet an image, according to Paivio, takes up less space in memory than does a sequence of verbal description which contains the same information. When we access an image in memory we retrieve, in an instant, a bundle of complex information "organized synchronously";[11] by contrast, when we access an abstract word, we retrieve one unit of information.

But, for all that, it is a verbal cue which most often initiates an image. Indeed, Paivio concludes that imagery itself rarely functions independently of language. To explain our ability to move so readily between images and words, whether we are describing scenes or generating drawings from descriptions, and to explain the advantages of such an ability, Paivio has given expression to a "dual coding" hypothesis of memory, which has provided the most successful account so far of the role of imagery in learning and memory tasks.[12]

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[6] For the term, see Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 7–8. See also Farah, "Is Visual Imagery Really Visual?".

[7] Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 8.

[8] This realization is not new: for analysis of the experience of Simonides, whose observations on the power of imagery and its relation to memory led him to analyze and set down his techniques for recall (Cicero, *de Or.* 2.357), see F. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London, 1966), chap. 1.

[9] Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 13–14.

[10] Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 15–16.

[11] For the phrase, see Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 8–9.

[12] See Paivio, *Mental Representations: A Dual Coding Approach* (New York and Oxford, 1986). For an overview of the theory and its contribution to our understanding of the comprehension of metaphor, see A. Paivio and M. Walsh, "Psychological Processes in the Comprehension of Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 2d ed., ed. A. Ortony (Cambridge, 1993), 307–28. For evaluation of the theory, see M. Marschak, "Imagery and Organization in the Recall of Prose," *Journal of Memory and Language* 24 (1985): 734; A. Baddeley, *Human Memory: Theory and Practice* (Hove and London and Hillsdale N.J., 1990), 106–9.

According to his theory, when we name a familiar object, two kinds of memory traces will be evoked simultaneously, a visual response (we see an image) and a verbal response (we register a word). The advantage of such dual coding, which we might explain crudely in terms of right-brain and left-brain activity, is the probability that recall for the material in question is increased because the concept has been stored in two ways: "there are two paths to an idea rather than one."[13] The two memory codes are individually advantageous in different contexts (in different tasks or in different aspects of the same task), since visual imagery stores information in a synchronous fashion, as we noted above; and the linguistic code stores it sequentially. Imagery, therefore, not only provides a vast repertoire of concrete memories which embody much of our knowledge of the world but it can be used, whether consciously or unconsciously, to facilitate recall.

It is possible, too, to identify another special advantage of imagery. It can promote understanding as well as recall.[14] Actual pictures, or diagrams, work as "advance organizers" for readers or listeners as they process discourse such as narrative or explanatory text; they provide listeners or readers with a schema, a conceptual outline, which enables them to focus their attention and to organize their ideas appropriately, in order to build a mental model for understanding what is being presented to them in words.[15] It is important for us in the context of this discussion to observe that *mental* images, pictures in the mind's eye, can serve the very same functions, of promoting comprehension and recall, as do *actual* pictures and diagrams.[16]

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[13] Paivio, "The Mind's Eye," 16–17.

[14] On the important link between imagery and comprehension, see A. Glenberg and W. Langston, "Comprehension of Illustrated Text: Pictures Help to Build Mental Models," *Journal of Memory and Language* 31 (1992): 129–51, who study the cognitive processes which underlie the "facilitative effects of [actual] pictures on text comprehension" (129).

[15] See R. E. Mayer, "Can You Repeat That? Qualitative Effects of Repetition and Advance Organizers on Learning from Science Prose," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 75 (1983): 40–49; and Glenberg and Langston, "Comprehension of Illustrated Text".

[16] See J. D. Bransford, *Human Cognition: Learning, Understanding and Remembering* (Belmont, California, 1979), 123; M. Marschak and R. Reed Hunt, "A Reexamination of the Role of Imagery in Learning and Memory," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 15 (1989): 710.

Similes and "pictureability"

A simile, as we know, is a formal verbal comparison, in which an idea or an entity under discussion is likened to another idea or entity which has some similar features. To effect this comparison, the "target domain" (the idea under discussion) is explicitly "mapped" by the domain of the simile (or the "source domain").[17] This source domain, sometimes also called the vehicle, is usually concrete: that is, in Paivio's words, it is "pictureable." It should not surprise us that people prefer concreteness and pictureability in similes;[18] this preference for material which can be readily stored in and accessed from memory as image is consistent with the findings I have reported above.

We expect that a simile (the source domain) will have properties in common with the target domain. But the two domains cannot overlap completely. Investigations have shown that similes, like metaphor, work at two levels. Certain specific aspects of target domain and vehicle *must* be similar; others are of necessity dissimilar. The selected vehicle will be one which draws attention to the similarities between the two domains while remaining sufficiently distant so as to emphasize the differences.[19] The reason why a speaker selects as a vehicle an image which is conspicuously dissimilar from the target domain has been debated over the last twenty years.[20] A distinctive

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[17] For the terminology, see G. Lakoff and M. Turner, *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago, 1989), chap. 2, "The Power of Poetic Metaphor," especially 63–64. For an alternative terminology, see R. Tourangeau and L. Rips, "Interpreting and Evaluating Metaphors," *Journal of Memory and Language* 30 (1991): 452–53: Lakoff and Turner's "source domain" is referred to as the "tenor" in Tourangeau and Rips' paper; and their "target domain" is referred to as the "vehicle". On "mapping" a set of correspondences, see Lakoff and Turner, 4; Tourangeau and Rips, 453.

[18] For discussion, see A. Katz, "On Choosing the Vehicles of Metaphors: Referential Concreteness, Semantic Distances, and Individual Differences," *Journal of Memory and Language* 28 (1989): 487–88; for his results see 495. Katz's discussion considers metaphors rather than similes. But the two entities have so much in common that there would be little or no difference in the findings if the experiment were reconstructed to examine similes. On the common ground shared by similes and metaphors as non-literal comparisons, see A. Ortony, "Beyond Literal Similarity," *Psychological Review* 86 (1979): 161–80.

[19] See Katz, "On Choosing the Vehicles of Metaphors", 487–88 and 495: "[T]he selected vehicles are sufficiently distant to emphasize differences but sufficiently close to maintain similarities" (495).

[20] See M. McDaniel and G. Einstein, "Bizarre Imagery as an Effective Memory Aid: The Importance of Distinctiveness," *Journal of Experimental Psychology* 12 (1986): 54–65.

or, to take this further, a bizarre comparison will catch the attention of the listener, and hold it; and because it demands and receives a greater amount of processing time it will be more memorable.[21] As for the informativeness of such an unconventional comparison, Andrew Goatly looks to information theory, which states that the more predictable an item is the less information it carries.[22] Unconventional comparisons, therefore, are rich in information because of their novelty and their unpredictability. On the other hand, a striking comparison must be carefully monitored by a storyteller, since it may become a distraction from, rather than an enhancement of, the meaning of the passage in which it appears. We should remember, too, that a readily pictureable vehicle which generates some kind of emotion, such as our fear of wild creatures—lions or wolves—or which evokes the pathos of a helpless creature near death, will favor a transfer of that emotion from the vehicle to the target domain and thus enhance its memorability.[23]

How do we process a simile? When we hear or read those formal verbal signals which announce a comparison (words and phrases, for English-speakers, like "like," "just as . . . so," "as . . . so"), we prepare ourselves for the mapping exercise which I have alluded to above. As we process the ensuing comparison, we draw on our repertoire of semantically linked images and bring to our mind's eye the appropriate picture. If, for example, we have to deal with the simile "[s/he is] as wholesome as new bread and butter," a comparison which has always delighted me, we will bring to mind and note both the salient (but dissimilar) and the less obvious (but shared and, therefore, highly relevant) features of the comparison. The salient features are the bread—I imagine it as a thick slice from a wholemeal loaf—and its cool, fresh, and natural spread. These obvious features are important because they fix an image in our mind's eye

[21] See McDaniel and Einstein, "Bizarre Imagery," 55. Note, however, McDaniel and Einstein's conclusions, 63–64: although bizarre imagery is more easily accessed in comparison with more mundane images, it does not assist in any remarkable way in promoting the recall of material associated with it.

[22] See A. Goatly, *The Language of Metaphors* (London and New York, 1997), 164–65.

[23] See Goatly, *Metaphors*, 157–58: ". . . if images are based on specific experiences which were once actually perceived, they are likely to be associated with the emotions they produced at the time of perception." See also Tannen's useful discussion of imagery and its contribution to storytelling in terms of both understanding and involvement, in D. Tannen, *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge and New York, 1989), chap. 5.

and thereby ensure the potency of the comparison. The image may well be supplemented by our memory for touch, smell, and taste: all senses will combine to ensure the memorability of the simile. What is crucial to the comparison is that we are being invited to understand an individual's character in terms of the wholesomeness of fresh, simple, but sustaining food. This understanding derives from our everyday, non-technical knowledge about diet and nutrition. So, when we compare an individual to a slice of bread and butter we are declaring him or her to be sincere, unaffected, and good.

It is interesting to note that in reading the bread-and-butter simile we are obliged to overlook one essential element: the use of butter in the quantity I envisage is now recognized as being unadvisable for one's health. Because this attribute does not accord with the features of the target domain, for which simplicity and wholesomeness are the critical factors, we do not include that element in our reading of the simile. As we have noted above, it is a common feature of similes that there is incomplete correspondence between source and target domain; and that in processing the simile some aspects of the vehicle, even otherwise essential aspects, must be disregarded. That is, our reading of the simile is inevitably guided by our appreciation of the context in which it occurs. Just as the simile assists us in reading the action of the narrative, so the action of the narrative provides us with cues for reading the simile.[24]

The ability to *read* a simile depends, as Paivio has proposed, on dual faculties: the ability to project the suggested image in our mind's eye and simultaneously to access the relevant information. The relevant information—the knowledge, for example, of the dietary value of fresh bread—may be described as cultural knowledge. It has been acquired through actual and indirect experience, all of which is recorded in episodic memory (the memory for event sequences) as schemata or scripts.[25] These scripts will be activated along with the relevant images. Together, therefore, image and cultural knowledge

[24] See Katz, "On Choosing the Vehicles of Metaphors," 495; but see also Ortony, "Beyond Literal Similarity," who believes that the features which are salient for the vehicle are indeed crucial for interpreting the metaphor.

[25] On episodic memory and the storage of episodic material as schemata or scripts, see R. Schank and R. Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, N.J., 1977); for a summary of their hypotheses for classicists, see E. Minchin, "Scripts and Themes: Cognitive Research and the Homeric Epic," *Classical Antiquity* 11 (1992): 229–41.

assist us in comprehending discourse—and remembering what has been said.

When we *generate* a brief simile in conversation or in informal storytelling we follow a similar course. If we were asked to explain either our decision to use a simile or our choice of material, we would in most cases reply that, at some point of our narrative, the action of the tale evoked a memory which was instantiated as a vivid image in our mind's eye;[26] because this image caught for us the essence of the action, we judged that the pictorial quality of the image would be important in some way also to our listeners and to the story. In accordance with Paivio's dual coding hypothesis, words which would describe this remembered image would be prompted by the image as it came to mind. This prompting function, which is fundamental to dual coding, is clearly of benefit to all storytellers as they cast about for the words they need; it must have been of great benefit to Homer, especially when he gave a sustained performance before a large audience.

The functions of similes

Similes serve the storyteller and his audience in a variety of ways. In collating a list of possible functions I have drawn principally on Goatly's valuable discussion of the functions of metaphor, which I have modified in the light of the cognitive material I have presented above.[27]

The first function which I identify is that of *explanation* and *modeling*, in which a simile may be used to explain in terms which are more familiar to the audience a concept which is relatively abstract or unfamiliar; in this function the simile serves as an advance organizer. A second function is *reconceptualization*, which goes beyond the earlier function of explanation; literary similes, especially, attempt to

[26] In Gentner's words: "Mental experience is full of moments in which a current situation reminds us of some prior experience stored in memory" ("The Mechanisms of Analogical Learning," in *Similarity and Analogical Reasoning*, eds. S. Vosniadou and A. Ortony [Cambridge, 1989], 199). See also R. Schank and R. Abelson, "Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story," the lead article in *Knowledge and Memory: The Real Story*, ed. R. Wyer (Hillsdale, N.J., 1995), 1–85, passim.

[27] Goatly, *Metaphors*, 148–67. I omit those functions which are exclusively the focus of metaphor: ideology; disguise; humor and games; and calls to action.

bring about a completely fresh understanding of experience. A simile may well open the way to observing relationships which are implicit in the narrative; thus it will assist in creating a richer reading than would ordinarily be available from the narrative itself. A third function is that of *filling lexical gaps*; we resort to similes when there is no word or form of words available to describe an action or an event—or, if there is, we cannot recall it at the moment we need it. A fourth function is that of *expressing emotional attitude*; this, according to Goatly, is one of the major functions of metaphor, especially as it occurs in literature.[28] Such impact derives from the tension within a metaphor or a simile between the notable similarities and dissimilarities between it and the target domain and the emotional associations of each. *Decoration* and *hyperbole* are taken together as a fifth function, whereby concepts are simply elaborated in another guise, the guise of a simile, for the purpose of drawing attention to themselves. Because the comprehension of similes and metaphors relies on the audience's ability to recognize and understand the reference of the vehicle, a sixth function of this device grows out of this mutual understanding between speaker and listener: the *cultivation of intimacy*. Intimacy may develop between a speaker and his or her audience when the speaker chooses vehicles for comparison which refer directly to the experience of the audience. Next, just as metaphor can be used, consciously or unconsciously, to structure the development of a text, so may a simile; an explanatory function and a *textual structuring* function may operate together. The next-to-final category brings together three items: *enhancing memorability, foregrounding*, and *informativeness*. These functions are together related to the vitality and the imagistic quality of the comparison. As we have observed already, similes which evoke vivid or even exaggerated images seize the audience's attention and enhance understanding and memory. Finally, a simile, unlike a metaphor, is a form of repetition, although repetition in this case is effected in new terms. As repetition, the simile works towards increased understanding and emphasis, as we have noted already; but I suggest that it serves a further pragmatic purpose: that of *prolonging the audience's pleasure* in the narrative moment.

By way of summary, I follow Goatly in proposing that the functions of similes fall into three broad categories: some are ideational, for they express new ideas about the topic; some are interpersonal,

[28] Goatly, *Metaphors*, 158.

in that they build new relations between speaker and listener; and some, since they are concerned with the organization and presentation of the message, are textual. Many similes in their context will at any one time serve a number of purposes, from all three of these categories.

Similes and their context

Are similes a literary phenomenon? Or are they part of everyday discourse? The answer to this question is implicit in much of the discussion above. But I draw attention to Tannen's observations on the relationship between everyday talk and literary discourse. She points out that all those forms which we have long considered to be literary forms, such as repetition, the use of imagery and detail, and tropes which operate on meaning, such as metaphor and irony, are, in fact, forms which are "spontaneous, pervasive, and often relatively automatic" in everyday talk; they have been "borrowed" from spoken discourse and polished—or "intensified"—for use in more formal literary discourse, to achieve much the same rhetorical effect.[29] Similes, we must conclude, are likewise part of everyone's repertoire, and always have been. In spoken discourse we use a limited range of images (drawn from everyday life, from the animal world, and from our cultural heritage) for pictureable terms of comparison. Our similes may be brief and stereotypical; but it is clear that the ability to access them and to use them to advantage is not restricted to the great poet who writes, or to the great poet, like Homer, who sings, even though Homer's similes are in some ways different from our own. We all understand, for the most part sub-consciously, how to construct and how to read a simile.

The simile in Homer: the image and its message

In the Homeric simile, as in similes which we devise and use today, the source domain is usually an image which is readily pictureable: a lion, for example, or a bird, a falling tree, or a bright-colored

[29] D. Tannen, "Repetition in Conversation: Towards a Poetics of Talk," *Language* 63 (1987): 574–75.

poppy. And the comparison is presented in a fashion similar to our own pattern of expression. Just as certain words and phrases in English signal similes, so there are predictable words and phrases in the Homeric epics (for example, the pattern ὡς . . . ὥς) for the same purpose.[30] Leaving aside for the moment the language of the similes, there is one striking respect in which the Homeric simile is unlike those which have been discussed above. The similes with which we are familiar in everyday English are relatively brief, as though the speaker is unwilling to claim too much of his or her listener's attention for what could be viewed as a mere decorative flourish.[31] In Homer the brief simile—the single image produced from the resources of memory—is the exception. There are relatively few of this kind.[32] By contrast, the so-called extended simile (which is, more accurately, a "less condensed" simile, for reasons which I discuss below) is the norm. Similes of this kind may extend over at least three lines of text, describing an image in detail and/or narrating a sequence of events. Similes of even five and six lines of text are familiar to readers of the *Iliad*.[33] Let us consider two examples of the brief simile before we turn to the so-called extended simile.

When Achilleus leaps up to supervise the preparation of Hektor's body for its return to Troy, he is compared by Homer to a lion: λέων ὥς (*Il.* 24.572).[34] Through this simile the storyteller invites us to locate points of correspondence between his hero and a creature of the wild. We note both the salient (but dissimilar) and the less obvious (but shared and relevant) features of the comparison. The salient features of the lion—his four paws, his reddish mane, his sharp

[30] For a complete list of such introductory expressions see Lee, *Similes*, 17–21.

[31] For example, "He ran like the wind"; "We worked like Trojans"; "She swims like a fish".

[32] See, for example, *Il.* 2.764, 800; 4.462; 5.299; 6.295; 8.215; 11.129, 485; 13.500, 754; 14.499; 19.17, 379–80; 20.244; 21.29, 237; 22.460; *Od.* 7.106; 8.280; 10.124; 12.433.

[33] See, for example, *Il.* 2.459–63; 4.141–45, 482–87; 5.136–42, 522–26, 554–58; 6.506–11; 10.183–87; 11.113–19, 172–76, 474–81, 548–55, 558–62; 12.41–48, 146–50, 299–306; 13.137–42, 471–75; 15.263–68, 271–76, 624–28, 630–36, 679–84; 16.156–63, 259–65, 384–92, 745–50, 765–69; 17.53–58, 61–67, 674–78, 725–29, 747–51; 18.207–13, 318–22; 20.164–73; 21.257–62, 573–78; 23.760–63. For a sampling of the extended similes in the *Odyssey*, see *Od.* 6.130–34; 8. 523–30; 16.216–19; 17.126–30; 19.109–14; 23.233–38. For a possible reason for the smaller number of extended similes in the *Odyssey*, see below.

[34] For discussion of this analogy expressed as a metaphor rather than a simile see Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 195–97.

teeth—are important in that they hold its image in our mind's eye.[35] What is more important is that we also bring to bear on the issue what we know of the instinctive behavior of lions and the fear which men and animals feel in their presence.[36] So when we compare Achilleus to a lion we are observing that the hero shares the lion's readiness for action, his uncompromising single-mindedness, and his power to terrify.[37] These particular lionlike qualities define Achilleus at this point of the tale. They explain what it is that could cause Priam, or even us, the audience, to fear him. As a consequence, we feel a moment of anxiety on Priam's behalf as the simile is expressed. Indeed, I disagree with Edwards, who claims that this short simile is used to add emphasis but "has no more special effect than a standard epithet."[38] Neither of the simple analogies which I describe here appears to me to be a cliché. Each has its own force, which derives from both its pictureable quality and the bundle of information which we access as we bring this image to mind.

When the Kyklops kills two of Odysseus' companions (*Od.* 9.289), he seizes them and slaps them ὥς τε σκύλακας against the ground.[39] The Kyklops' unsympathetic slaughter of Odysseus' men, Homer suggests, resembles the unthinking killing, in the rural world, of unwanted new-born pups. We feel a moment of shock, because the two acts do not to us seem compatible. We may not be used to dealing with dogs in this way, but we understand the rationale for what is being described. When Homer makes us realize that the Kyklops treats humans as casually as we might treat pups, we recoil.

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[35] Would Greeks have known lions? For brief discussion, see G. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1985), 269. An awareness of the name, the general appearance, and the nature of lions was possibly part of the cultural knowledge of the audience of traditional epic, even if, as Kirk notes, this information was distorted by hearsay and imagination.

[36] For the most part, we make assumptions about the behavior of lions (or, for that matter, about any members of the animal kingdom) in terms of our understanding of our own human characteristics and behavior.

[37] Cf. Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 195–96.

[38] Edwards, *Homer*, 102. This simple lion-simile brings with it a wealth of associated information, which the audience will access when they call up the image of a lion. When the poet uses the simile here, in the closing phases of the *Iliad*, he is referring his audience to all the more developed lion-similes of the epic, which describe any warrior's violent behaviour on the battlefield (see, for example, *Il.* 5. 161–62; 11. 113–19; 15. 630–36). I thank Janet Watson for this observation.

[39] The image is made more powerful by the auditory effect of onomatopoeia: κόπτ'. Martin, "Similes and Performance," 149, comments on the frequency with which Homeric similes report the sound of an action.

The force of these similes does not lie so much in language *per se*, but, in the first instance, in the image which is conjured up in our minds. We promptly evaluate that image in terms of our cultural knowledge, and we respond to it both in those terms and, as I have noted above, emotionally.[40] The storyteller's language simply serves as a prompt and a guide, to stimulate us to perform the exercise of visualization and to ensure that the picture which we build up is appropriate.[41] It is this process, whereby we refer to our memories to assist us in constructing the scene, and its cognitive and affective outcomes that remain in our minds even as the narrative moves on.

When we as an audience are processing the simple analogies which I have cited above, we are set a task by the storyteller: to evaluate the point of the simile for ourselves. What is it about Achilleus which reminds the poet of a lion? In what way does the killing of Odysseus' men resemble the killing of an unwanted pup? And why is this latter scene, in Polyphemos' cave, so shocking? In leaving this task to us, the poet engages us in both the analogy and the narrative into which it is integrated. This is the strategy of internal evaluation, whereby the storyteller requires his or her listeners to draw their own conclusions on the basis of the material provided.[42] The consequence of internal evaluation is that the audience, other things being equal, is engaged by the narrative, whether cognitively or emotionally; whereas external evaluation keeps listeners and readers at a distance from the tale. They are required to follow the storyline, but they are not invited to play any part in its interpretation. Homer's brief similes, therefore, as minor exercises in internal evaluation, draw us into the story. His extended similes function in a slightly different fashion; the poet wants to draw us into the story proper and invites us to evaluate it for ourselves, but his concern to direct us to other conclusions as well leads him to a more detailed presentation.

[40] Although these bare similes contain few directly expressed evaluative terms, they nevertheless convey their message through a simple, striking image: cf. the powerful φῆ κώδειαν of *Il.* 14.499.

[41] Lakoff and Turner, *More Than Cool Reason*, 90–91.

[42] For discussion of internal and external evaluation as two distinct storytelling strategies, D. Tannen, "Oral and Literate Strategies in Spoken and Written Narrative," *Language* 58 (1982): 4; and see also Minchin, "Describing and Narrating in Homer's *Iliad*," in *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and its Influence in the Greek and Roman World*, ed. E. Anne Mackay (Leiden, 1999), 49–64.

Homer's so-called extended similes

As I have already noted, the poet often presents similes in more leisurely form. In this respect, his style of presentation is quite different from our own. We prefer, in everyday talk at least and for reasons which I have noted above, to keep our similes brief; Coffey suggests that this may have been true also of everyday speech in the world of Homer.[43] Indeed, it has been argued that it is Homer's preference for the so-called extended simile which distinguishes the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* not only from everyday speech but also from other epic traditions.[44] And yet Muellner observes that extended similes are themselves condensations; and that, as such, they resemble Homer's brief similes.[45] He argues that a traditional medium, like Homeric epic, can omit from the surface of discourse elements which can be assumed to be stored in everyone's memory.[46] I agree with his proposition, but I wish to rework his explanation to accommodate it to what we know about human cognitive behavior. I propose, in line with my discussion above, that the narrative content of all similes is generated by the poet's memory for imagery; as the poet accesses imagery, he calls up also the relevant scripts from episodic memory, where his experience of event-sequences is recorded in minute detail. Although the singer's expression of any script may be detailed, it is unlikely that his version will ever be as comprehensive as the script which is held in memory. The narrative content of a simile, therefore, is likely to be a condensation of highly specific scripted information. Thus, Homer sang brief similes, which are highly condensed expressions of scripts, and extended similes, which are less condensed. I shall, however, continue to describe Homer's longer similes by the familiar term: the extended simile.

The real difference between the two modes of presentation—the simple simile and the extended simile—lies in the greater explicitness of the latter. Whereas in the simple analogy the relationship between source domain and target domain is not made explicit, and

[43] Coffey, "The Homeric Simile," at 114–15.

[44] See n. 1 above; and Bowra, *Heroic Poetry*, 275–80. For a contrary view, see P. Damon, "Homer's Similes and the Uses of Irrelevance," chap. 1 in *Modes of Analogy in Ancient and Mediaeval Verse* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961).

[45] For Muellner's useful comments on so–called "extended" similes, see "Cranes and Pygmies," 66.

[46] See Muellner, "Cranes and Pygmies," 66.

the audience becomes involved in the storytelling through the task of evaluation, in the extended simile the relationship between the two domains is generally elucidated through a brief narrative or narrative fragment which incorporates a number of pertinent details: thus the simile maps itself more completely over what is now an event-sequence and through it the poet encourages the listener to envisage the scene and to complete the comparison, as he, the poet, wishes it to be seen.[47] There is almost inevitably some irrelevant material; just as in our own similes there is material which does not correspond to the target domain, so there is material of this kind in Homer's comparisons.[48] Lakoff and Turner point out a reason for this accumulation of detail: it limits possible image-mappings and thus facilitates and directs our interpretation of the action along the lines intended by the poet.[49] That is, the poet retains considerable, although not complete, control of our reading of the simile (and, therefore, of our reading of the action).

It could be suggested that the explicitness of similes such as these may make them less interesting to us, since less effort is required of us if we are to interpret them.[50] But I do not accept that the extended simile is less interesting. Indeed, it retains its power to engage through the very detail which the poet includes. I draw attention to Tannen's comments on the role of imagery in narrative. She observes that details are important to us as listeners;[51] their particularity and their familiarity create a kind of intimacy—the intimacy of recognition.[52] And she notes that a scene made vivid by the use of detail may spark an emotional response; this, in its turn, promotes greater involvement and deeper understanding in the listener.[53] Furthermore, as

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[47] For discussion of the extensive mapping of simile over narrative event, see Fränkel, *Die Homerischen Gleichnisse*, chap. 1.

[48] Perfect correspondence in every detail is pointless in similes: see my discussion, above.

[49] Lakoff and Turner, *More than Cool Reason*, 91.

[50] Cf. G. Miller, "Images and Models, Similes and Metaphors," in *Metaphor and Thought*, 375.

[51] Tannen, "Imagining Worlds: Imagery and Detail in Conversation and Other Genres," chap. 5 in *Talking Voices*.

[52] For discussion of the role of the simile in creating intimacy through reference to the experience of the listener, see above.

[53] Tannen, *Talking Voices*, 135–36: "Images, like dialogue, evoke scenes, and understanding is derived from scenes because they are composed of people in relation to each other, doing things that are culturally and personally recognizable and meaningful." On involvement through emotional response, see above.

Edwards comments, the obvious point of comparison in the extended simile may itself overlie a "deeper and more significant, unstated meaning" which listeners or readers are expected to locate for themselves.[54] Let us consider two examples which will illustrate how the extended simile exercises its force within the narrative.

When the poet at *Il.* 13.389–91 describes the fall of Asios in battle at the hands of Idomeneus (cf. *Il.* 16.482–86, the fall of Sarpedon), he likens Asios' collapse, after a fatal strike from his opponent's sword, to the falling of a great tree—an oak, a poplar, or a pine—which has been felled by carpenters who wish to use its timbers for ship-building.[55]

> ἤριπε δ' ὡς ὅτε τις δρῦς ἤριπεν ἢ ἀχερωΐς,
> ἠὲ πίτυς βλωθρή, τήν τ' οὔρεσι τέκτονες ἄνδρες
> ἐξέταμον πελέκεσσι νεήκεσι νήϊον εἶναι·

> He fell, as when an oak goes down or a white poplar
> or like a towering pine tree which in the mountains the carpenters
> have hewn down with their whetted axes to make a ship timber.[56]

The scene which the poet describes is achieved by invoking the tree-felling script familiar to his listeners from their experience of the everyday. He provides a number of details: the carpenters, their axes, the tree (and its location, in a mountain forest), and its fall. What brings the description to life, however, is one particular item: these men are said to be ship-builders. But the ship-builders are not crucial to the comparison. What is essential to the comparison is the size of the tree and the emotions which a spectator might feel on seeing and hearing its slow fall to the ground. We know that Homer wishes us to think along these lines here, because he has chosen trees known for their great height; and he gives us an explicit cue in his epithet βλωθρή (390). Why, then, has he expanded his simile, to include the carpenters and their intentions? I propose a number of reasons. The first is that Homer wishes to set the image of men alongside the image of the great tree which dwarfs them. Such is the size of Asios. Having introduced men into the scene, Homer

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[54] See Edwards, *Homer*, 104.

[55] For similar tree-similes, see Simoeisios' fall in *Il.* 4.482–87 and Imbrios' at *Il.* 13.178–80. For discussion of the Simoeisios-simile, see Moulton, *Similes*, 56–58.

[56] The translations of the Homeric passages which I have quoted throughout this paper are drawn from R. Lattimore, *The* Iliad *of Homer* (Chicago and London, 1951); *The* Odyssey *of Homer* (New York, 1967).

introduces a motive for their presence; he is too much a storyteller to leave this as a loose end. And, as we have noted, details such as these are necessary to us if we ourselves are to interpret and respond to the scene which we visualize. What better in this case than to attribute to the carpenters the intention of using this great tree as ship-timber? This point too testifies to Asios' stature. A third reason lies beneath these others. This has to do with the emotions we might feel as spectators, whether we watch this scene or bring it to mind. The introduction of men and their purposeful and productive occupations points up, by contrast, the pathos of the target-scene: the wasteful killing, on the battlefield, of one of the bold Trojan allies.[57] There is nothing productive about this. At this point the target domain and the source domain are violently at odds, to such an extent that we cannot overlook the disparity. The simile, therefore, vivid because of its detailed imagery, gains further affective force through a bold, unexpected, and unstated contrast of opposites.[58] The image, along with—and because of—the evaluative material associated with it, stays in our minds.

A second simile, now from the *Odyssey* (16.216–18), is unusual in that it paints men as a hostile force. At the moment of recognition and reunion, Telemachos and Odysseus weep (213–15). The sound of their voices is like (indeed, it is greater than) the shrill cry of vultures whose fledglings have been stolen away by countryfolk (216–18).

> κλαῖον δὲ λιγέως, ἀδινώτερον ἤ τ' οἰωνοί,
> φῆναι ἢ αἰγυπιοὶ; γαμψώνυχες, οἷσί τε τέκνα
> ἀγρόται ἐξείλοντο πάρος πετεηνὰ γενέσθαι·

> [A]nd they cried shrill in a pulsing voice, even more than the outcry
> of birds, ospreys or vultures with hooked claws, whose children
> were stolen away by the men of the fields, before their wings grew
> strong; . . .

What is the point of comparison in this case? Now that Odysseus and Telemachos have been reunited, they can at last weep. It is not joy which brings their tears, but the pent-up sorrow of years of

[57] Coffey, "The Homeric Simile," 117, makes this point in his discussion of the tree-simile used at *Il.* 4.482. Whether Greeks felt ambivalent or not about setting out to sea in ships, the building of ships was essential to their livelihood. This is the sense in which I use the term "productive".

[58] For a similar comment on the simile of *Il.* 12.278–86, see Lattimore, *The* Iliad *of Homer*, Introduction, 43. On the memorability of bizarre or distinctive imagery, see above.

separation. The grief of father and son is deeply felt: each weeps at last the tears which he might have shed during their time apart.[59] To be sure that we understand their tears Homer calls up the image of great birds mourning the loss of their young. The information that the fledglings were taken from the nest by countryfolk allows us to complete a story. Thus we become involved in the sorry tale, and our emotions are engaged. Indeed, the simile works twice over. In the first instance, the grief of father and son is described in terms of the shrill cries of the birds; in the second, Odysseus' own grief is caught in the image of the parent bird deprived of its chicks. This image, which has been given added force by virtue of the emotions associated with it, replays the dramatic moment, with its affective links, for our greater understanding—and our pleasure.

The content of the extended simile

It is worth noting that each of the extended similes which I have discussed above touches in some general way on everyday life. They are by no means remarkable in the epics; a large proportion of Homer's extended similes represent aspects of daily life in the wider world remote from the battlefield of the *Iliad* and the troubled realms of the *Odyssey*, whether the poet makes reference to activities that might be conducted, for the most part, in a rural context, or invokes everyday understanding of the weather, or the behavior of animals in the wild.[60] This, indeed, is as we would expect: the simile, if it

[59] For commentary on this simile, categorized as a "reverse simile", see H. Foley, "Reverse Similes and Sex-Roles in the *Odyssey*," *Arethusa* 11 (1978): 7. Foley notes that Odysseus has just regained his son; and yet Homer marks this moment, paradoxically, with an image of bereavement. For reservations about the simile, see A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on the* Odyssey, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1989), ad loc.

[60] For general comments on Homer's similes which compare warfare with crafts and craftsmanship, see Scott, *Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, 107–13. For a useful categorization of similes, which demonstrates that Homer, as we do, drew on a limited range of material for his comparisons, see J. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the* Iliad*: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago and London, Phoenix edition, 1978), 188–89, who groups the similes of the *Iliad* under four headings: weather and natural phenomena, human activities of a productive nature (see his n. 60 for examples), hunting and herding, and wild animals amongst themselves. All of these could be reconciled with the life experiences (at first- or second-hand) of an audience of this epic tradition (cf. M. Nilsson, *Homer and Mycenae* [London, 1933], 275–77; Muellner, "Cranes and Pygmies," 73, explains the authenticity of the similes as "a transfor-

is to be effective, must connect with the experience of the audience; and yet it must offer a contrast to its target domain. Homer, therefore, is deliberately using a limited body of material to which all his listeners can in some way relate. The point of choosing this material is not simply to describe a world of peaceful and productive activity. He uses these familiar scenes as explanatory models, to engage us in an assessment of what is unfamiliar to us in the world of war[61] and to help us appreciate what is happening on the battlefield (for example, *Il.* 12.433–35: the image of the widow who weighs out her wool so carefully illuminates that moment in battle when both sides are so evenly balanced that neither gives way to the other) or in that other realm of competitive male activity, games (for example, in *Il.* 23.760–63 when the Lesser Aias and Odysseus struggle for the winner's prize of victory in the footrace in honor of Patroklos they are as close to each other as is the κανών, the shuttle, to the weaver's breast).[62]

And yet, when he uses a simile, Homer is breaking down the illusion that we are direct observers of the action. At these moments he calls his listeners back from the storyworld to the realm of performance; and, indirectly, he reminds us of the role he plays as mediator and guide.[63] Such a break, midway through a stretch of battle narrative, may well be refreshing to the audience; it may give them the opportunity to focus elsewhere for a moment before the storyteller draws them back, also by way of the simile, to the narrative. Thus the simile which compares the rebound of an arrow from Menelaos' corselet to the rebound of beans and chickpeas in the blast of the winnowing fan (*Il.* 13.588–90) provides a pause in the narrative and an opportunity to bring to the mind's eye images of rural life; and yet the storyline of the narrative proper cannot be forgotten, because the simile reflects the events of the storyworld.

mation of traditional lore . . . into a coherent, generative, poetic system"). On the linguistic lateness of the extended Homeric similes, see the comments of Shipp, *Studies in the Language of Homer*, chap. 6. For a contrary view, see Muellner, "Cranes and Pygmies", 98, and the persuasive arguments of Bakker, in this volume.

[61] See Redfield, *Nature and Culture*, 186–87.

[62] For a discussion of the simile, in terms of weaving technology, see W. Leaf and M. Bayfield, *The* Iliad *of Homer* (London, 1895), ad loc.

[63] See S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville, Tenn., 1990), 64–66, at 66. Although the poet interrupts his story, he does not interrupt his performance. And yet, in invoking the everyday world, he allows his audience a moment's respite: these images come readily to mind.

Similes which overshoot the mark

I have noted that the majority of Homer's similes are extended by narrative in the form of a story or a story fragment; and we have already studied a number of examples. There I was concerned to demonstrate Homer's use of detail in connection with his strategy of internal evaluation. I turn now to observe the way in which he marries the narrative of the simile with the progress of the narrative proper. Let us consider first a straightforward example: the comparison of Agamemnon to a lion.

When Agamemnon is in the midst of his ἀριστεία, described in *Iliad* 11, he is likened, at 113, to a lion. The image is developed at 113–19, when he is likened to a lion which has just broken into the lair of a deer and has snatched her young (νήπια τέκνα) and torn them apart (113–115).[64] The doe is terrified, unable to help. She gathers the last of her strength and runs to escape the beast. The details which convey her sheer terror are conveyed in the images of her τρόμος αἰνός (the quivering which seizes her, 117) and her sweating as she makes her escape (ἱδρώουσα, 119). The story, however, is fragmentary, in that we have no resolution: we do not know whether the doe escapes. But, in terms of the action of the simile, what happens to the doe is irrelevant. The lion-and-doe story should parallel the story of Agamemnon and the Trojans; it should go no further. What is critical to the simile are those elements which describe the current plight of the Trojans, who see two companions brought down by Agamemnon and in fear run to escape him.

When the poet extends his simile through narrative, what he offers is, as it were, a commentary on the scene which runs in the cinema of his mind's eye.[65] The words and phrases he requires for his song will be stimulated by the images themselves as the small scene he is viewing unfolds. His task at this point is therefore relatively easy: narrative, by virtue of its relationships of cause and effect, comes readily to us all.[66] The storyteller, as I have noted above, may

[64] For commentary on this simile and the series of lion similes which are generated in this episode, see B. Hainsworth, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary,* vol. 3 (Cambridge, 1993), ad loc.

[65] For a description of storytelling in somewhat similar terms, see S. Fleischman, *Tense and Narrativity* (Austin, 1990), 266–75; E. J. Bakker, "Storytelling in the Future: Truth, Time, and Tense in Homeric Epic", in *Written Voices, Spoken Signs*, 16.

[66] On narrative as a natural activity which comes easily to us all, see Schank

choose whether he will compress his narrative, alluding only to the principal elements of the story from which the simile is drawn, or whether he will expand it with detail by giving full expression to relevant scripts. Expansion of a simile, then, is not a chore. It is a choice which the poet readily makes, for imagery, memory and linguistic processes (notably, his formulas) combine to assist him as he sings.

There are, however, traps for the poet who extends his simile into narrative. Given that narration is natural and relatively easy for the poet, it may happen on occasion that he takes his simile-narrative beyond the point which he has reached in the narrative proper, with the result that the simile ceases to be relevant, confusing the audience and overshadowing the action of the narrative proper. I should concede the possibility, of course, that the narrative of the extended simile may on occasions have been intended to foreshadow what is to happen in story itself; and I should concede the possibility that some similes are at certain points so condensed or so allusive that we today do not understand their meaning.[67] I shall, however, consider two examples of what I regard as narrative over-extension, not as a reproof to Homer but because those instances which do not conform to our expectations may provide us with opportunities to learn more about the cognitive processes which underlie the production of the simile—and of narrative.

Let us consider the simile (*Il.* 4.141–45) through which the poet describes the dark blood which flowed from Menelaos' wound when Pandaros' arrow pierced his corselet (134–40). Here the poet claims that his intention is to compare the visual impact of Menelaos' blood on the pale skin of his thighs and legs to a vivid purple dye with which a woman from Asia Minor paints an ivory piece, which is destined to be a cheekpiece for a horse (141–42). If that is so, then

and Abelson, *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding*, especially 17–19; and, more recently, "Knowledge and Memory," passim.

[67] See, on my first point, G. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius and Vergil* (Princeton, 1933; reprint, New York, 1966), 14–15. For an example of possible foreshadowing, see *Il.* 22.26–32; but note Duckworth's comments (15) on the dangers of reading announcements of the future into comparisons. And, on my second, see Muellner, "Cranes and Pygmies," especially at 98. I am not persuaded by Muellner's argument, that our failure to follow Homer's difficult similes is entirely due to our own lack of experience in the tradition. It may be so in some cases; but I cannot accept that that factor explains away all our difficulties with certain similes.

the remaining narrative elements of the simile (143–45) are, strictly speaking, pointless:[68]

> κεῖται δ' ἐν θαλάμῳ, πολέες τέ μιν ἠρήσαντο
> ἱππῆες φορέειν· βασιλῆϊ δὲ κεῖται ἄγαλμα,
> ἀμφότερον κόσμος θ' ἵππῳ ἐλατῆρί τε κῦδος·
>
> [I]t lies away in an inner room, and many a rider
> longs to have it, but it is laid up to be a king's treasure,
> two things, to be the beauty of the horse, the pride of the horseman: . . .

The narrative of the simile, from 143–45, goes beyond what is necessary in terms of the main narrative line. This stretch of narrative is true to the *Iliad* in leisurely style and in the cultural milieu which it invokes: its reference to great kings, to their delight in fine craftsmanship, and to their pleasure in the accumulation of the rare and the beautiful. Nevertheless, it is with some surprise that we find ourselves returned to the brothers' reaction of horror, at 148–52, when they see Menelaos' blood and the wound itself.

Kirk suggests that the extension of the simile (143–45) implies the unique value of Menelaos to the Achaians.[69] Such a reading would be hard to justify, since it is the relationship between the brothers which is brought to the fore in the following lines (148–82). I suggest that the poet has been seduced by his image of the craftswoman and her fine work (141–42) and has allowed the story of the fate of the ivory piece to distract him. The further development of the comparison, which keeps our attention on the cheekpiece, weakens its original point and, through its inclusion of superfluous material, is confusing. Nevertheless, this problematic moment in the narrative, which reveals an unexpected incompatibility between narrative and simile, throws some light on the mental processes which generate this genre.

An extraordinarily powerful simile is that of *Il.* 16.156–63. Here the poet compares the fighting spirit of the Myrmidons, now at last armed for battle, with the lust for blood of wolves (156–57):

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[68] Strictly speaking, they are pointless; yet, as I have shown above, it is the inclusion of human participants and their productive activities which cultivates intimacy, introduces pathos to the scene, and makes it memorable.

[69] See Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 1, ad loc.

οἱ δὲ λύκοι ὣς
ὠμοφάγοι, τοῖσίν τε περὶ φρεσὶν ἄσπετος ἀλκή . . .

And they, as wolves,
who tear flesh raw, in whose hearts the battle is tireless . . .

In fact the simile quickly moves beyond the point at which it coincides with the main narrative. We soon see the wolves gorging themselves on a stag brought down in the mountains: they feed, they drink, they regurgitate clotted blood (ἐρευγόμενοι φόνον αἵματος, 162). And their bellies are full (περιστένεται δέ τε γαστήρ, 163).

Despite Janko and Nimis' defence of the extension of the simile as an instantiation of the meal which we might otherwise expect at this point of the preparations for battle, I suggest that the poet has quite simply allowed the simile to go beyond the limits defined by the narrative proper.[70] The feasting of the wolves does not describe the present situation; rather, it looks ahead to the performance of the Myrmidons in battle, alongside Patroklos. It anticipates, for example, their attempt to strip the armor from and dishonor the body of Sarpedon (544–47) and might be compared with the battlefield performance of Agamemnon, like a lion among cattle, at *Il.* 11.172–76. I propose, therefore, that the poet has allowed the scene in his mind (the scene of the simile) to run ahead of the narrative proper. And, forgetting that he must coordinate the two, he has continued to sing his simile-song.[71]

The image of wolves glutted with blood is readily pictureable, and distasteful, to the point that the animals and their bloodied jowls

[70] S. Nimis, *Narrative Semiotics in the Epic Tradition* (Bloomington, Indiana, 1987), 23–42, especially at 41, attempts to justify the inclusion of the wolves' meal, claiming that a meal is an established element of preparations for battle (cf. *Il.* 19.145–237). The expected but unrealized meal is transformed therefore into a negative meal: the meal of the wolves. See also R. Janko, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 4 (Cambridge, 1992), ad loc. I point out, however, that a meal, if that is indeed what the wolves' meal is intended to represent, is completely out of the question at this point of preparations for battle. Fully armed men cannot eat and drink; they do so before donning their cumbersome war gear. And note that a meal is not included in the narrative of the preparations for the great day of battle in *Il.* 11.

[71] On the relative ease with which he can compose narrative, see above. For other examples of similes which lose their relevance as they are developed, see *Il.* 17.674–78 (the relationship of Menelaos to Antilochos is not an eagle:hare relationship); *Il.* 22.308–10 (nor is Hektor and Achilleus' relationship that of an eagle to a lamb—or a hare). And see Muellner's discussion ("Cranes and Pygmies," at 65) of the irrelevant element at *Il.* 2.462. On such slips of attention, see Baddeley, "Attention and the Control of Memory," chap. 6 in *Human Memory*, especially 127.

divert our attention from the Myrmidons. The possibility of distracting his audience from the narrative proper, however, may be for the poet a risk worth taking. His weakness here, however, has been his failure to correlate his descriptions of the actual performance of Achilleus' men with the promises which he has made. Their performance in subsequent battle does not seem (with the exception of *Il.* 16.544–47) to justify the comparison.

Both these similes are drawn from the *Iliad.* We are aware that similes are more frequent in this epic than in the *Odyssey*. The reason for this is that the backdrop to the action of the *Odyssey*—and the cast of actors—is of itself much more varied. Variety of setting reduces the pressure on the poet to build variety into his song in other ways (for example, by means of similes).[72] The similes in the *Iliad*, therefore, are designed to serve all the separate functions which I have set out above (such as reconceptualization, intimacy, and emotive force) and more: they are designed to assist in distinguishing individuals and their actions in a narrative which lacks the imagistic richness of the *Odyssey*.

Visual memory and oral song

I have noted above that the expression of a simile, which is verbal, is triggered by an image which has sprung to mind. This is consistent with Paivio's dual coding hypothesis, which encourages me to revise Scott's claim that Homer's similes were the products of verbal memory and his implication that they had little connection with the mind's eye.[73] I propose that Homer produced his similes in the same fashion that we all do. It is in response to an image which springs to mind that the poet finds the words to sing. The simile he is singing is not a memorized sequence of words; rather it is the verbal account of an image—or a series of images. It is these images, the visual code, which have given him access to the verbal code, to the words he sings.

An essential tool for the oral poet is his visual memory. This is a powerful aid, firstly, because it is easy to bring images to mind; secondly, because an image is very effective as a mnemonic aid;

[72] For comment on this point, see Scott, *Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, 120–21.
[73] See Scott, *Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, 162–64.

thirdly, because it functions as a cue for the retrieval of other material; and, fourthly, because the poet's visualization of the unfolding story and the visualization of the images which become his similes direct him to the words he needs—to the formulaic phrases of his tradition. The speedy responses of visual memory are, therefore, critical to the oral poet, who depends on the efficiency of all the functions of memory to generate his song. The poet who works in writing, by contrast, has time to ponder. The ability to retrieve and to generate visual imagery quickly and economically is far less important to him than it is to the oral storyteller.

Furthermore, we have noted Homer's preference for extending his similes with additional narrative material. This is the mark of an oral poet at work. He delights in narrative because he can produce it with ease, supported by both his ability to visualize and the episodic nature of his memory for cultural knowledge. Here again we see the poet working with the resources of memory as he performs.[74] By accommodating his presentation to its structures he makes his task easier. What is interesting to me is that the strategies he has adopted to assist him in singing one of his similes—his reference to visual memory, his exploitation of scripts, his preference for narrative in the formulation of similes—have all left their mark on the song. What may have originally been a series of enabling strategies for the poet now play their part in enhancing the pleasure of the audience.

The simile in performance

As Muellner has argued, similes are an integral part of the tradition which Homer has inherited; and he has drawn on this tradition for his own purposes.[75] But he does not suggest the form in which this inherited material may have been transmitted; nor does he speculate on how the poet prepared his similes for the moment of performance. Scott uses evidence which he has gathered on repeated similes to argue for both a repertoire of similes and for a certain

[74] Cf. my discussion of the way in which Homer works with the resources of memory in another context in E. Minchin, "The Performance of Lists and Catalogues in the Homeric Epics," in *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, ed. Ian Worthington (Leiden, 1996), 3–20.

[75] See Muellner, "Cranes and Pygmies," 65–66, 96–99.

degree of preparation in advance of performance.[76] The simile, he notes, could have been prepared in advance and stored in much the same way as a typical scene, one which describes the arming of a warrior or the preparation of a meal, might be stored. But Scott, as I have noted above, and Muellner view "storage" in terms of language.[77] I have proposed, by contrast, that the secret of recall lies in the images which underpin each simile. The fact that there are so few extended similes which are repeated detail-for-detail and word-for-word in the two epics suggests to me that a verbal response alone was not the key to the simile.[78] If we approach the issue of preparation through Paivio's "dual coding" hypothesis, we might better understand the means and the purpose of rehearsal. In rehearsal, Homer visualizes a scene. The images he sees lead him to the language he needs. He may "perform" this sequence one or many times in private, until he is satisfied with the way the simile is developing, with its correlation with his story, and with his presentation of the whole. If he rehearses as I have described, the cooperation of visual imagery and language processes will be all the more efficient when he sings before his audience.

That an oral poet such as Homer practised for performance is without question, as we have observed in the case of the extended lists which he has included in his epics.[79] Storytellers today have more often than not practised their stories in advance: they have run over the event sequence, devised a style of narration appropriate to their tale, and called up the language in which to express it. We all find ourselves, at one time or another, rehearsing a story

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[76] See Scott, *Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, 127–40. For the repeated similes, see 129–30. These are as follows: *Il.* 5.782–83 = *Il.* 7.256–57; *Il.* 5.860–61 = *Il.* 14.148–49; *Il.* 6.506–11 = *Il.* 15.263–68; *Il.* 11.548–55 ~ *Il.* 17.657–64; *Il.* 13.389–91 = *Il.* 16.482–84; *Od.* 4.335–39 = *Od.* 17.126–30; *Od.* 6.232–34 = *Od.* 23.159–61. It should be noted that there are comparatively few similes in the two epics of any length which are repeated word for word.

[77] See Scott, *Oral Nature of the Homeric Simile*, 130, n. 9: "repetition [of similes] is not to be explained on the basis of written reuse but on the basis of a very strong tradition"; and see above.

[78] By way of example, contrast the cattle-yard similes at *Il.* 11.548–56 and 17.657–64, in which the image is similar, but the expression of each simile is different; and see n. 77 above.

[79] On rehearsal of stories, see Schank and Abelson, "Knowledge and Memory," 76–77; on the rehearsal of lists, see Minchin, "The Performance of Lists and Catalogues".

which we aim to tell before an audience of family or friends.[80] This desire to practise is driven by our need to tell a story effectively: a successful telling will be to our credit; a failed telling will cause us to lose face.[81] Professional storytellers in an ancient oral tradition would have been driven by the same impulse; they would rehearse their songs before performance.

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Homer's similes are more than occasional grace-notes which characterize and define epic song, as Coffey, Edwards and, more recently, Martin have argued. My account above of the complex function of the simile is an extension of Edwards' position. He sees the simile as a "technique of expansion"; it is a "means of creating a pause," which enables the poet to hold still the action and to add new thoughts or contrasting emotions.[82] I, however, argue for a stronger position: that the simile is completely integrated into the epic, serving the singer, the audience, and the song itself.

In his conclusion to his work on similes Carroll Moulton laments that he has been unable to uncover a "key" to the Homeric simile. He explains that the search for a key has been made impossible for him because of the enormous variety of similes in Homer. Although he recognizes a single common denominator—that the similes present concrete details—he remarks that this is "virtually meaningless" for purposes of analysis.[83] I wish to differ. If there is any key to the similes it is precisely this, banal as it may seem, that they are all readily pictureable. It is this quality which unites them in their service to the storyteller, as mind's eye and memory work together to

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[80] For a delightful moment in fiction, when a storyteller who wishes to give the impression of spontaneity even as he tries to recapture for his listener the intensity of an experience in his past is caught out, see D. Lodge, *Small World* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1984), 72: "'That's a very fancy metaphor, Philip,' said Morris. 'I can hardly believe you've never told this story before.'" Philip has been practising this tale.

[81] For discussion of a failed story, see W. Labov, "The Transformation of Experience in Narrative Syntax," in *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular* (Philadelphia, 1972), 366.

[82] See Edwards, *Homer*, 109. On the simile as a "descriptive pause," see also Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator*, 64.

[83] See Moulton, *Similes*, 155; and cf. Coffey, "The Homeric Simile," 132.

give expression to song; it unites them in their service to the audience, as memory and mind's eye interpret what is heard or read; and it unites them in their service to the song itself, in the many ways in which I have described above, whether similes serve to clarify what has been described within the narrative, to enlarge on it, to emphasize it, to evaluate it, to enhance it; or whether they work to involve the audience's emotions in the action through their play on image and memory. For the goal of the simile is, in one way or another, to prolong the pleasure of a selected narrative moment and thereby to make that moment recognizable, vivid, and unambiguous—in short, memorable—for its listening audience.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORAL-FORMULAIC THEORY TODAY

Mary Sale

By the "oral-formulaic theory" I mean Milman Parry's argument that Homer must have been an oral poet because his use of word-groups corresponds with the practice of oral epic poets, but not of literate imitators of the Homeric style. All of Homer, says Parry, is formulaic in one sense or another, and all formulae can be fitted into systems; just as systems of noun-epithet formulae facilitate versification, so do all formulaic systems. And only an oral poet would display so thoroughly schematized a style.[1] Thus Parry gives us a litmus test to distinguish one class of epic poets from another, a test that has been applied, in Parry's formulation or modified, to much other epic poetry. Parry's concepts have also been used to analyze other oral genres, such as praise poetry, but it is in the epic that they work best. "Parry's theory," says Joseph Russo in a recent excellent discussion of the Homeric formula, "remains impressive for its durability in the face of so many challenges and revisions . . . It is inevitable that today no reader of Homer can fail to be in some sense a Parryist."[2]

Unfortunately Parry's argument is seriously wrong on two counts, both of them insufficiently noticed. First: when Parry argues that systems of noun-epithet formulae make versifying easier, he is very persuasive, once we have revised his understanding of "essential ideas" and dropped his notion of audience indifference to the meaning of epithets. He is also persuasive when he argues that formulae of all kinds, including structural formulae and those consisting only of verse-patterns, can be fitted into systems of some kind or other. But when he says that *all* systems, and therefore all the elements of the Homeric

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[1] M. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse*, ed. A. Parry (hereafter *MHV*); see especially 317.

[2] J. Russo, "The Formula," in *A New Companion to Homer*, ed. Ian Morris and Barry Powell (Leiden, 1997).

text, make versifying easier, the leap from "some," the noun-epithets, to "all" is simply not justified. The fallacy is well hidden; Adam Parry, for instance, missed it (*MHV*, xxxii–iii). Many readers, of course, have complained about Parry's extreme assertion that Homer was "given his phrases all made" (*MHV*, 317); but too often this has been softened to "most of his phrases," with the question, "What systems really do facilitate versification?" left unanswered.

Second, some literate poets have highly formulaic texts: Parry's treatment of Virgil is much too cursory, and his failure to compare Homer to Quintus of Smyrna is as astonishing as it is disastrous. Quintus was not an intelligent man, but he was very learned, and a superb imitator of Homer: it is no easy task to find the difference that marks Homer as the oral poet and Quintus the literate.[3] Moreover, Parry did not do nearly enough to prove that oral poets compose as he thought Homer composed. The formulae in Bosnian epic are arrestingly similar to the Greek in form, to be sure; but as he noted, they can differ considerably from one poem to another, so that Bosnian poets cannot be said to be "given their phrases all made."[4]

Both of Parry's flaws can in fact be corrected; Parry had a genius for making mistakes that, when set right, leave his fundamental position secure. But even after we salvage the theory, we cannot get it to prove that Homer's poetry was in fact composed in performance. It could have been. It could have been dictated. Or Homer could have composed it pen in hand. All we can prove is that the poems we call Homeric must have been produced, more or less as we have them, by a poet or poets who were *able* to compose in performance.

Since Parry's day, some scholars have evolved theories of the development of the oral tradition that depend wholly upon the correctness of Parry's argument.[5] Others at the opposite extreme believe

[3] See F. Vian, *Recherches sur les Posthomerica de Quintus de Smyrne* (Paris, 1959), 250. Even the difference between Virgil's style and Homer's is much less than scholars have noted: see my "Virgil's Formularity," in *Signs of Orality*, ed. E. Anne Mackay (Leiden, 1999), 199–220.

[4] Similarities between Greek and Southslavic formulae are pointed out in *MHV*, 376–90. Later Parry wrestled with the problem that there "existed for the Greek heroic songs a fixity of phrasing [from poem to poem] which is utterly unknown in the Southslavic" (*MHV*, 444–45. This does not mean, as some have thought, that Parry's concept of the formula had changed! See my "Defense," 408.)

[5] Cf. Gregory Nagy, "Homeric Questions," *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 122 (1992): 17–60.

that Parry has been refuted, that we know for sure that Homer was literate, though his tradition may have been oral.[6] Others believe that Homer was "oral-derived," meaning that he may have sung, or dictated, or written, but that even if he was a literate imitator, his poetry was composed in the *manner* of oral poetry.[7] These scholars do not need Parry: sufficient for them the general comparisons, made by Albert Lord and others, between Homer and modern oral-epic poetry. Still others, perhaps the majority, believe that Homer was an oral poet, even if he dictated or wrote.[8] And these scholars do need Parry's oral-formulaic theory, or some modification that does not depart dramatically from it.

Within the Parryan context, three lines of thought have contributed heavily to our understanding of formulaic style. First, while the old theories of oral poetics in general have been disappointing, recent studies of the aesthetics of formulae and formulaic epithets by Paolo Vivante, John Foley and Egbert Bakker have been most fruitful.[9] Second, theories of the origin of formulae have flourished. For Parry formulae were compositional tools that came ready-made from the tradition; for Michael Nagler, the true formula is a mental template from which particular word-groups arise; Eduard Visser thinks that the reality is a single word, a nucleus, to which are added variables; John Foley sees the phrases as manifestations of a language governed by traditional rules; Egbert Bakker seeks their ultimate origin in ordinary conversation.[10] None of these views is securely established, but all have shed much light on formulaic style. Third, formulae lend themselves very nicely to statistical analysis, which can be used both

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[6] The best champion of this extreme position is K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993), but neither he nor Wolfgang Kullmann nor Joachim Latacz have directly confronted the virtual identity between the statistics of Homer and of oral poetry. See also my critique of Stanley in "Homer and Avdo," *Voice into Text: Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, ed. Ian Worthington (Leiden, 1996), 37–38; and of other detractors of Parry in "In Defense of Milman Parry" (hereafter "Defense"), *Oral Tradition* 11.2 (1996): 408.

[7] The term "oral-derived" is J. M. Foley's, *Immanent Art* (Bloomington, 1991), xv.

[8] Lack of space prevents my discussing the contributions of all these scholars, but see Russo ("Formula"; he omits R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* [Ithaca, 1989], 146–205).

[9] P. Vivante, *The Epithets in Homer* (New Haven, 1982) and *Homer* (New Haven, 1985); Foley, *Immanent Art*; E. J. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech* (Ithaca, 1997).

[10] Parry, *MHV* passim, especially 317; Michael Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley, 1974); E. Visser, *Homerische Versfikationstechnik* (Frankfurt, 1987); J. M. Foley, *Traditional Oral Epic* (Berkeley, 1990); E. J. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech.*

to revitalize Parry's theory and to analyze the technique of formulaic-epic composition.[11]

The use of statistics calls for a rigidly objective and rudimentary concept of "formula." We sidestep all questions concerning formulaic origin, or what poets were conscious of, or the "reality" of formulae as a compositional tool. These can come later, if need be. We use the evidence of our senses, and of elementary grammar and metrics, to identify exactly repeated word-patterns (such as ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς)—i.e. sounds and their basic meanings, syntax and meter. Once we have identified and counted these patterns, we may later go on to discuss their subtler properties and their history, but we never abandon our "sense-datum" criterion for what we *mean* by "formula." It may seem astonishing, but this definition is all that comparative statistics needs to vindicate the essential Parryan claims that formulae facilitate versification and that Homer was highly trained in oral composition. And it is enough to lay a foundation for the aesthetics of formulaic repetition: we can utilize the sensitive analyses offered by Vivante, Foley and Bakker without worrying about their different views on formulaic origin.

Certain noun-phrase formulae are exactly repeated so often that we can usefully call them "regularly-employed." We find such word-patterns in all formulaic epic, but oral poets use them far more frequently. Further analysis reveals that most regularly-employed formulae are "multi-purposed" (MPF) meaning only that they are "context-free"—usable anywhere in the poem where syntax and meter permit—and that they fall in the commonest cola, the "major cola." There is a considerable variety of exactly repeated word-patterns, and each is important to the style, but the "regularly-employed multi-purposed formulae" (RMPF) are the most characteristic and by far the most important for the current paper. It is RMPF that we use both to restore Parry's argument and to account for the artistic power discussed by Vivante, Foley and Bakker.

With RMPF, oral poetry uses what it finds useful to create a beauty of its own. That this happened deliberately, or even con-

[11] Russo ("Formula") cites and discusses work by Margalit Finkelberg and myself; my other contributions through 1994 are given in the Bibliography to the *New Companion* (above, note 2), and pieces of especial relevance are singled out in the Bibliography below. (This seems a good occasion to mention how much so many of these pieces owe to personal communications from Georg Danek, Richard Janko and Albert Lord.) See also Ahuvia Kahane, "Quantifying Epic," in the *New Companion*.

sciously, we of course do not say. In our *Critique of Parry* below, we merely count the word-pattern formulae in their meter and syntax, note which ones are context-free and occupy major cola, and show how Parry's argument fails because he tried to attribute the properties of these RMPF to everything he wanted to call a formula. Under *Essential Ideas and Aristarchus* we attribute the context-freedom of RMPF to their expressing "essential ideas" (not in Parry's sense) that are traditional and timeless. Under *Formulaic Repetition and Artistic Power* we show that similar essential-idea phrases are found exactly and frequently repeated in religious ritual, and that this parallel lies at the heart of the artistic power observed by Vivante, Foley and Bakker.

Finally, under *Statistics*, we show that RMPF overcome what information theory calls "entropy," the tendency of information systems (such as formulae) to randomness (e.g. non-formularity). Translating Parry's "facilitate versification" by "overcome entropy" allows us to continue to treat formulae as sense-data, and still make it clear why RMPF are found abundantly in oral poetry. They are not nearly so abundant in literate verse. Even the genius of a Virgil, who borrows from Homer everywhere, who is so thoroughly self-trained in formulary stylistics that he could probably have composed in performance, knew that in certain areas he dare not challenge a poet who had learned directly from experts.[12] Even the dull intellect of the superbly autodidactic Quintus crowds its luck only so far; and either because his ear warned him that he would be unbearably tedious, or because he really did not know how often Homer repeats his phrases, Quintus' numbers fall far short of Homer's. Indeed it is only here that we expose his imposture as an oral poet. Hence RMPF give us a superb litmus test for oral training, far more satisfactory statistically than the formula-density tests. RMPF abound in Homer; they actually occur even more often in the *Odyssey* than in epic verse that we know to have been orally composed, and eight *times* as often as in Quintus. Hence, however the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* were actually created, their composer(s) were highly trained in oral composition.

The dual role of RMPF as the markers of oral composition and the foundation for specifically oral-epic aesthetics is, I think, the oral-formulaic theory today.

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[12] Cf. my "Virgil's Formularity."

Critique of Parry

We could perform the statistical analysis and interpret it successfully without running through Parry's argument; but that would obscure both the fact that our basic argument is merely a modification of Parry's, and also the extent to which we eventually rely on Parry's concepts of systems, context-freedom, principal types (= our "fall in major cola"), and facilitation of versification.[13] Parry's approach is that of the sciences.[14] He gathers data (formulae), and theorizes (formulae belong to traditional systems); later he hypothesizes (Homer composed orally), and verifies (Homer resembles oral not literate poets). He seeks whenever possible to quantify: "To those who object that the study of style ought not to be a problem in statistics we can reply that the use of figures is our only means of verifying with precision what would otherwise remain a vague impression" (*MHV*, 37 n).

Parry begins by defining his data: a formula is "an expression regularly used, under the same metrical conditions, to express an essential idea" (*MHV*, 13), where "essential" means "stripped of stylistic superfluity," so that πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς, for instance, means "Odysseus." This remained his definition throughout his life (cf. *MHV*, 272), but even in 1928 he often uses the term "formula" in what seems a much looser sense. Some of his "equivalent formulae" are not and cannot be "regularly employed" (cf. *MHV*, 187–89). Other formulae are particularized (*MHV*, 76–79, 153–84), so that they necessarily lack stylistic superfluities, and "essential idea" loses all force; the same criticism applies to formulae of the αὐτὰρ ὁ type (*MHV*, 20).

[13] Moreover, scholarly conscience has a role to play. My real education in Parry's ideas, begun in 1958 with close friendship to his son Adam, has deepened steadily over the years; I could not possibly say anything about formulae, even in statistical analyses, "independent of Parry." This is not merely a biographical fact; it arises also from the quantitative nature of Parry's work, since whoever does statistical or other scientific work on Homeric formulae *must* be either vindicating or revising Parry.

[14] A "stringently scientific and objective examination" is how his son Adam describes Parry's first doctoral thesis (*MHV*, xxvii; Adam abbreviates this thesis with "TE"). While affirming Adam's judgment, let me acknowledge the help I have had from three excellent scientists for their lengthy discussions and criticisms of my own work: Alfred Holtzer (Professor of Physical Chemistry, Washington University), Edward Vastola (Professor Emeritus of Neurological Science, Washington University) and Richard Keeling (scientist in a neurological laboratory, Washington University).

Untroubled by these problems, Parry repeats his definition almost verbatim in 1930, so he must have thought it more general than it appears to be. He goes on in 1930 to discuss verb-phrase formulae beginning with αὐτὰρ ἐπεί(-ήν) (*MHV*, 276); again we find no "stylistic superfluities" worth mentioning, so we cannot identify an essential idea. Parry gives us the *overall* idea, "but when he (we, they) had done so and so" (*MHV*, 275), but an essential idea is different. It is precise: "Odysseus," "he went," "when day broke," (*MHV*, 13, 272). Each formula Parry quotes on page 276 is repeated only slightly more than twice, on average, giving a total of only forty-one occurrences for the entire formula-type; this is a minute amount compared to the formula-occurrences of almost all the systems of noun-epithets Parry discusses, so again we wonder why he calls the αὐτὰρ ἐπεί(-ήν) phrases "regularly employed." (He gives an answer on page 313: if we had more material, we would encounter many more examples of every kind of formula.) On this same page 313 he speaks again of formulae that share meter, syntax, and "one important word"; we might call these "fixed/variable" formulae. He then adds certain repeated single words, and phrases that share only meter and syntax (known as "structural formulae"), and finally some lines with the same verse-pattern. These are all no doubt formulaic in some sense, but it is not clear what that sense is.

Discussion of "formula-type" and "system" may help. Parry's first publication, the 1928 dissertation (TE), develops his theoretical framework with the concept of "formula-types"; these embrace formulae with particular meters and parts of speech, such as "noun-epithet after the hephthemimeral caesura." Formulae "in a particular grammatical case and of a particular type" make up a "system" (*MHV*, 17). Unfortunately, though Parry often used the term "system" in 1928, he did not define it then. Instead he illustrated it, first with noun-epithet formulae in the nominative (*MHV*, 17–19), then with αὐτὰρ ὁ plus participle or finite verb (*MHV*, 20), then throughout TE with various other noun-epithet formulae. He did define "system" in 1930, as "a group of phrases which have the same metrical value and which are enough alike in thought and words to leave no doubt that the poet who used them knew them . . . as formulas of a certain type" (*MHV*, 275). The definition fits perfectly the αὐτὰρ ἐπεί(-ήν) systems he cites; they have two words (virtually) in common and mean "but when he (we, they) had done so-and-so" (Parry's translation, 275). But it fails lamentably for the noun-epithets. Consider

the system of the formula-type "nominative proper-noun-epithet after the bucolic diaeresis," which includes πότνια Ἥρη, δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς, ἱππότα Νέστωρ, etc. These formulae are alike in case, syntax and meter, but not "in thought and words"—not, at least, as the αὐτὰρ ἐπεί(-ήν) formulae are alike.

This disparity has caused modern scholars to say that Parry conceived of formulaic systems only in 1930.[15] But the concept is crucial to the argument of TE, and indeed the later definition well suits the αὐτὰρ ὁ systems of 1928 (*MHV*, 20; cf. also 277). The point is far from trivial: Parry will eventually argue that the entire Homeric text is formulaic and systematic (*MHV*, 16, cf. 317, "schematization"). Somewhere in his mind there lurked more general definitions of "formula" and "system" that he never divulges, believing perhaps that, armed with his stated definitions, we can infer what he really means from his text. And we probably can: a formula, in his more general definition, appears to be a phrase (or occasionally, a word) at least five morae long (cf. *MHV*, 275 n. 1) that exactly repeats the *meter* of some other phrase. A more general formula-type is at least the verse-pattern common to particular formulae; it often includes the syntax, and can accommodate even more (e.g. our "multi-purposed," "exactly repeated six times"). And a system will be either a group of formulae specified by a particular formula-type (call it a "simple system"), or a combination of simple systems (a "complex system").

Table I gives us a picture of a complex system, one of the least esoteric, though not precisely the same as any of Parry's. I have taken his "ornamental noun-epithet systems, principal types" (not an exact quotation, but see *MHV*, 19), and narrowed it to all the simple systems in the *Odyssey* of noun-phrase formulae that are regularly employed and multi-purposed by our own definitions (RMPF). Our "multi-purposed" means "context-free" (embracing all of Parry's "ornamental") and "occurring in major-cola" (Parry's principal types); but we include certain noun-verbs, and for us, "regularly employed" means "exactly repeated six times or more." We shall talk more about "context-free" under "essential ideas" in the next section; Table I itself specifies the cola we call "major," referring to them with abbreviations: 1-β, 1-A1 and 1-A2 are the initial trochee, dactyl and

[15] Cf. J. M. Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition* (Bloomington, 1988), 28–29.

choriamb respectively; B1 is the penthemimeral, B2 the trochaic, and C1 the hephthemimeral caesura; C-2 is the bucolic diaeresis; 12 is verse-end. Note that the numbers stand for different formulae; if we were counting formulaic *occurrences*, the numbers would of course be far larger:

Table I: Different Noun-phrasal RMPF Systems, *Odyssey*

Cola	Noun-epithets					Noun-verb	Total
	nom	gen	dat	acc	voc		
Commoner:							
B2–12	7	5	6	2	0	8	28
C1–12	11	3	2	4	2	6	28
C2–12	13	0	6	13	1	16	49
Rarer:							
1–β, A1, –2	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
1–B1	1	1	0	1	0	4	7
B1–12	2	2	0	1	1	1	7
Total RMPF	34	11	14	22	11	35	126

Each of the entries on this table stands for a simple system defined by a formula-type. One formula-type, for instance, is "accusative noun-verb RMPF falling in C2-12 (i.e. after the bucolic diaeresis)," which specifies a simple system that contains 16 members. It should be obvious that we can construct many systems, some of them very different from this: a complex system with all the MPF in Homer; complex systems with the formula-types αὐτὰρ ὁ and αὐτὰρ ἐπ- plus a verb or verb-phrase before the trochaic caesura (*MHV*, 313); a structural formulaic system with a trochaic past-tense verb plus a bacchiac dative noun after the bucolic diaeresis (*MHV*, 313); and so on.

Despite the additions, omissions and terminological differences, if we had included the *Iliad* on Table I, we would have captured the heart and soul of TE. Table I has the really "extensive" systems (cf. *MHV*, 16, 276), the systems that contain many different formulae, *and* many formula-occurrences, *and* many formula-types. All the grammatical cases and familiar cola are covered, and where the entry is "O" the reader can easily see why. Most people and objects and ideas commonly referred to in the *Odyssey* have RMPF. The total of

126 different formulae, each exactly repeated six times or more, is obviously large.[16] These 126 different formulae yield a total of 1,512 occurrences, which is twenty-five percent of the 6,096 formula-occurrences and seventeen percent of the 8,973 total occurrences of nouns used in the *Odyssey* thirteen times or more.[17] Twenty-five percent and seventeen percent are a lot; the corresponding figures for Quintus, whose Homeric style fooled some excellent scholars, are four percent and two percent. The systems on Table I are also "economical": none of the formulae that have the same referent also possess the same meter and syntax.

From the theoretical framework of these RMPF systems Parry develops the full-blown theory of TE:

> 1. Formula-systems are useful because they are so extensive and economical, and because they make versifying easier. They could do this, in part, because the audience was indifferent to the meaning of ornamental epithets (*MHV*, 118–145); this unhappy idea brought Parry the further misfortune of defining "essential idea" as "what remains after all stylistic superfluity has been taken from it" (*MHV*, 13).[18] We shall retain "essential idea," but redefine it; we shall continue to argue that RMPF (and MPF generally) facilitate composition—not because of audience indifference, but because they are context-free and fall in the major cola. Our statistical tests will prove this. For now we simply affirm that RMPF-systems are extensive and economical, and they make composition easier.
>
> 2. Such systems cannot have been developed by one poet, or one generation of poets; they are traditional. Most scholars have accepted this, and we need not defend it.

[16] In my "Defense of Milman Parry" the number on the nearly identical Table 1 is 145. That was not a mistake: it is just that in the current paper I have made RMPF the *sole* basis for the comparisons among the seven poems. In order to be absolutely fair to Quintus—in order to be utterly certain of the size of the difference between the literate imitator and Homer—I ruthlessly excised all conceivably arguable cases to produce Table I above.

[17] Thus thirty percent of the noun-occurrences are non-formulaic, and this remains true when we count *all* the nouns (it is only for statistical reasons that I cite the figures for nouns occurring at least thirteen times; see "Defense," 383–84). But please remember that this thirty percent will include fixed/variable formulae, structural formulae, and verse-pattern formulae; the seventy percent represents only noun-phrases. Note too that a noun with a different ending must be called a different noun, since the meters may be different.

[18] Adam Parry says of TE that "the principle arguments have never effectively been challenged" (*MHV*, xxvii). This is not wholly true; he himself rejected his father's argument that the audience was indifferent to the meaning of the epithets (see lxii), and without this argument the proof of facilitation (as Milman Parry offers it) is imperiled.

We need not linger on the remainder of TE, which is mostly an attempt to account for exceptions to the principle of economy by showing how formulae are created by analogy.[19] The argument for Homer's orality is picked up and developed in "Homer and Homeric Style" (HS, in *MHV*, 266–324) in 1930, but it begins with a point made in 1928: "outside of noun-epithet formulae and epithets of heroes we are compelled to forgo quantitative analysis" (*MHV*, 105); "for the expression of a certain *portion* of the various ideas of heroic poetry, the bards made use of a formulary technique adapted to . . . hexameters" (*MHV*, 106, emphasis supplied). We have seen how self-discrepant the concepts of formula and system become when in HS we go beyond noun-epithets. And yet Parry believed that the entire text was formulaic, at least in the general sense we set forth above; every phrase must belong to a system based on one formula-type or another. He has already shown that noun-epithet systems make versification easier; therefore, he argues, a text which is fully analyzable into systems—is fully "schematized" (*MHV*, 314, etc.)—must consist entirely of phrases that smooth the versifier's path. And since the noun-epithet systems are necessarily traditional, must not all systems be traditional?

If every part of his text facilitates versification, Homer must have had a "complete need" for an "easy way of making verses" (*MHV*, 317); and if every part consists of traditional formulae, the tradition must have provided this easy way. He could be original in *rearranging* (*MHV*, 82) or *grouping* (*MHV*, 324) the formulae, but he created no formulae; he was "barred . . . in every phrase from the search for words" (*MHV*, 317). He inherited not merely the *framework* of his systems—"third-singular-past-tense trochaic verb plus bacchiac noun in the dative," for instance—but his *phrases* "all made": bare frameworks would have entailed the "search for words," and his phrases would not be *all* made. And the "constraint that thus set Homer apart from the poets of a later time" (*MHV*, 317) was the need to compose orally. Had Homer been literate, he never would have accepted all these phrases; as an oral poet, he had to.

This argument is vulnerable to criticism from many sides;[20] we

[19] Once we see that economy is a feature of RMPF *systems*, most of these exceptions vanish.

[20] For instance: how do we know that an oral poet needed to be handed every phrase, and not just the framework, the formula-type? Can it really be just as easy

shall eschew the strokes and counter-strokes, and simply insist that the only systems that make versifying easy, so far as Parry has really demonstrated, are the context-free noun-epithets that fall in major cola, the MPF. That all systems lighten the compositional labor is an attractive possibility, but remains unproved. That all formula-types are traditional is highly probable, but that each individual formula is traditional is far from certain. The view that Homer must have composed the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* orally should never have been advanced: Parry knew that Homer might have written out the poems (*MHV*, 322).[21] The view that Homer was a trained oral poet, by contrast, makes an excellent hypothesis. It needed scientific verification by quantitative comparisons, with oral-epic poets and with Homer's literate imitators. We need to ascertain that known oral-epic poets use the same percentages of the various kinds of formula-systems as Homer does—or at least of the RMPF systems, since they demonstrably facilitate versification and thus may well reveal the oral poet. We need to prove that Homer's imitators use different percentages; otherwise Homer himself could have been an untrained literate imitator of some earlier poet.

Parry had begun to compare Homer with Virgil and Apollonius (*MHV*, 24–36, 299–300); Virgil needs more attention. He exhibits many formulae; Parry dismisses this as an attempt "to make a poem like Homer's," but perhaps Homer was trying to make a poem like some predecessor's. In any case, Parry needed to return to Quintus, whom he obviously disliked (*MHV*, 428, the M.A. thesis), but who is a much closer imitator than Virgil. In search of comparisons with oral-epic poets, Parry did go to Yugoslavia in 1933, and 1934–5, and felt thoroughly vindicated by his Yugoslavian experience.[22] He published material that gave partial verification (*MHV*, 376–390); again, much more was needed, especially with the Bosnian RMPF.

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to remember and use a phrase such as τεύχε κύνεσσιν that is highly relevant to its context, and occurs in our text just once, as it is to use a phrase that possesses a context-free epithet, and occurs over and over? If so, why do we have context-free epithets?

[21] If so, says Parry, he must have composed them orally first (not a negligible possibility, though Parry puts it forward ironically); for, he adds, if Homer were merely a trained oral poet who learned to write and composed in writing, he would surely have abandoned the oral style. Why, we ask, would he have done this if it was the "best of all styles" (324)?

[22] *Pace* some of his critics: see "Defense," 408.

Essential Ideas and Aristarchus

Nothing in Parry's theory has caused more gnashing of teeth than his "essential ideas" and "audience indifference." (These are two sides of the same coin: the essential is what remains after stripping away "stylistic superfluities"; these are mostly the ornamental epithets, which are superfluous because the audience is indifferent to their meaning.) But the mournful fact is that the theory of audience indifference was both unfortunate and unnecessary. Unfortunate, because many an epithet is highly colorful, and we want to hear its meaning. Unnecessary, because it is enough to say that the poets could use the ornamental-epithet formulae (MPF) anywhere in the poem, and our "context-free" does this just as well. Also, Parry's argument bites back: why did the poets labor to give the audience epithets that would almost always work, no matter where they occurred in poetry? They must have known that the audience would hear their meaning. "Context-free," let me stress, does not mean "always irrelevant"; the poet could juxtapose epithet and action whenever he wished—and indeed if the epithet could never be used with relevance, it would not be context-free! Note too that occasions do occur in which a context-free epithet is avoided; a favorite example of mine is when the poet eschewed the unpleasant "Of the Cretans, Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, was the leader," and substitutes "Idomeneus the spear-famed" (*Il.* 2.645).

The theory of audience indifference must go. We replace it with "context-free formulae," defined simply as noun-phrases usable wherever meter and syntax permit; *why* they are context-free will emerge as we proceed. Whenever we see him Achilleus—standing, sitting, talking, sleeping—is swift of foot, πόδας ὠκύς; the poet does not always say so, but he could if he wished. When he does say so, it may or may not be relevant: the audience hears the epithet and makes its own inferences. The feet are swift, even if Achilleus fails to catch Hektor without divine aid (*Il.* 22.228–46). Agamemnon is always a wide-ruling lord of men, even after death (11.397). Odysseus is always much-enduring—even in the *Iliad*, before he has much to endure.

We can tell, by going through the texts, which formulae must be context-free, but it is by no means always clear *why* they are. Ships are everywhere swift, black and hollow, and forever fare widely over a perennially wine-dark sea. Wine is always "gleaming" (αἴθοπα); apparently there is no wine that does not gleam, even if Homer

sometimes omits to say so. As I stare at my own wine, and find it dull, or languish in a ship that crawls over the water, I may want to disagree. But as I reflect on the poet's reiterated assurances, I realize that he must find brilliance essential to wine, swiftness to ships—as if the poet's world were analogous to the world of Platonic Forms, and my wine and ship are imperfect copies.

Hence we keep Parry's "essential idea," confining it to formulae that are context-free, and redefining it to mean: "an idea, one of whose parts is essential to the other or to the whole." This is meant to be a metaphor: what we actually divide into parts is the noun-phrase referring to the idea. "Swift" is part of the whole phrase "swift ships," and swiftness is essential to the ships; "wide-ruling" is part of "wide-ruling Agamemnon," and it is essential to Homer's Agamemnon that he rule widely. μῦθον and φάτο are parts of the whole phrase and φάτο is essential to μῦθον: a μῦθος is always something that is spoken. (But not all speaking results in a μῦθος, so μῦθος is not an essential part.)[23] Note that the parts are usually not mutually essential to each other: while all wine gleams, not all the gleaming in the world is attributable to wine; all ships are swift, but so too are Achilleus' feet; we cannot dress without clothing, but our clothes may be stored in a chest. There are exceptions: in the noun-noun phrase ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης ("sea's surf," classified as a noun-epithet), each noun refers something essential. There is no surf (ῥηγμίς) without a sea (θάλασσα), no sea without a surf.

The exercise just performed should make it clear that a *context-free* formula is an *essential-idea* formula: what can be said in any context is essential; what is essential can be said anywhere in the poem. To speak of Achilleus as essentially swift of foot may not say a great deal more than "Achilleus' feet are swift." But to say that ships are essentially swift is helpful, because it is not true that all ships are swift. We are going to see Aristarchus wrestling with an identical paradox, the stars shining around the brilliant moon at the end of the eighth *Iliad*; that is why I think we can trace "essential ideas" to the great critic, even though he does not use the term. And we can go on from there to show ultimately how essential ideas are timeless truths that are guaranteed by nature and/or the tradition.[24]

[23] On the difference between μῦθος and ἔπος, see Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 12–42.

[24] Two warnings are appropriate here. Essential-idea formulae need not occur in

Let us look at a few examples of essential ideas from the other traditions we shall be employing for comparison. *Pius Aeneas* ("devoted Aeneas") expresses what is essential to Aeneas. We know this from the hero's *pietas*, his devotion to family, gods, citizens, and the Roman future, but we know it also because Virgil repeats *pius Aeneas* exactly so often in so many contexts (see also "Virgil's Formularity," 214–220). Quintus repeats ἐϋμμελίης Αγαμέμνων seven times, enough to persuade us that it expresses an essential idea. We know, and Quintus knows, that in the *Iliad* the ash-spear is associated with Euphorbos, Achilleus, and Priam (ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο, in fact), not Agamemnon; and Quintus himself uses the epithet of Achilleus. Thus Agamemnon is not essential to the spear, but Quintus' repetitions render the spear essential to him. Similarly *Guenes li quens* (Count Ganelon) in the *Song of Roland*: there are earls that are not Ganelon, but no Ganelon that is not an earl. The great formula from the *Song of My Cid* goes in both directions: *mio Cid* (my lord) is the same as *el que in buen ora nasco* (he who was in good hour born): there is no Cid who was not in good hour born, and he *is* the one who was born in a good hour, so that the poet can use *el que in buen ora nasco* all by itself. In *Petar Dzhenerale* from Avdo's *Wedding of Meho*, being the Christian General cannot be separated from being Peter.

The importance of essential ideas becomes clearer when we trace the idea back to its roots in Aristarchus; the data can be found in *MHV*, 120–24. Some epithets, says Aristarchus, are used κόσμου χάριν (ornamentally) to name qualities that belong to things φύσει (by nature) or καθόλου (in general)—that is, the moon, even when new, is naturally or generally "bright" (*Il.* 8.555); clothing, though dirty, "shines" by nature (*Odyssey* 6.74). Earlier critics had complained, with some justification, that in these passages the epithet φαεινήν sounds wrong; Aristarchus argues that we can accept it, provided that we hear it as expressing what is naturally or generally true. Elsewhere Aristarchus uses the term ὡς εἰκός. Aigisthos was "blameless"

major cola: they are not necessarily MPF, though they must be context-free. And an immense number of noun-phrase formulae are *not* context-free: they express "particular ideas" (coining the term from Parry's "particularized epithet," *MHV*, 153–65). Compare Θέτις κατὰ δάκρυ χέουσα with Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα: Thetis is always silver-footed, but she is not always weeping. The weeping is context-specific, the epithet particularized. Again, consider χεῖρας ἴαλλον: hands are not always *cast* on something, and what is cast are not always *hands* (e.g. *Il.* 8.300, 309); the phrase, though very frequent in the *Odyssey*, is context-specific. Particular ideas are not our subject, but we need to note their existence.

(*Odyssey* 1.29) because of the virtues he possessed ὡς εἰκός (Parry translates "natural virtues") such as "birth, looks, and intelligence."[25]

Aristarchus also discusses ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο, arguing—against critics who maintained that the epithet was true "formerly"—that ἐϋμμελίω is cosmetic (*MHV*, 121). This does not seem parallel to "flowering meadow of Skamandros, delightful stream, brilliant moon" and like cases cited by Parry; Priam does not (or did not) wield a fine ash-spear "by nature." We want φύσει (if Aristarchus did use the term of this formula), or καθόλου or ὡς εἰκός, to mean something more; or else we want a different term. The meaning "by tradition" suggests itself, but Parry is resolutely certain that Aristarchus had not grasped the traditional nature of the fixed epithet (*MHV*, 126), and I lack the expertise on the Homeric scholia needed to gainsay him. The meaning "essentially" also suggests itself: it is essential to the Priam of epic poetry that he carry a fine ash-spear. No ash-spear, no Priam. Moreover, this meaning is a reasonable extension of φύσει: the moon shines by nature, i.e. by its nature, i.e. it is essential to it to shine. We might also sense that the meaning that underlies φύσει, καθόλου or ὡς εἰκός is "essentially." We have no proof, and it may be that we are drawing too freely from the Peripatetic vocabulary; but I think that we are being true to the spirit of Aristarchus' insistence that epithets used κόσμου χάριν are true φύσει.[26]

The Homeric text bristles with essential ideas that are true to nature: a θάλασσα does have a ῥηγμίς (surf); Dawn by nature must

[25] That this phrase was used by Aristarchus is an inference: Parry is here citing Eustathius as giving "what was apparently Aristarchus' explanation" of Homer's phrase, basing his inference on Aristarchus' parallel argument on *Il.* 6.160.

[26] It seems very likely that Parry himself had once, consciously or unconsciously, interpreted Aristarchus as we have. Otherwise it is not easy to see where he got, and why he used, the phrase "essential idea." He is not talking about something being essential to something else; he means "the idea that is the essence," but never explains of what it is the essence. It cannot be the essence of the *phrase* πολύμητις 'Οδυσσεύς, for this is to confuse words with things. It cannot be the essence of the *referent* of πολύμητις 'Οδυσσεύς, for (with πολύμητις a stylistic superfluity), the *only* referent of the phrase is Odysseus, so that Odysseus becomes the essence of Odysseus! Parry could have said that a formula expresses "the *signifié* (or referent) that remains when stylistic superfluities are removed from the *signifiant* (or sign)" The Saussurean or Fregean vocabulary was available to him, and would have been much clearer. Hence my theory that Parry had already taken the phrase "essential idea" from the passages of Aristarchus that he cites, where the meaning of the epithet *is* essential to the meaning of the noun. Then when he evolved his deplorable idea that the audience was indifferent to the meaning of the epithet, he had to alter—not dramatically—the meaning of "essential idea."

appear, we see with our eyes, ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι, and hold things in our hands, χερσὶν ἔχοντες. An essential truth, utterable in any context, past, present or future, is necessarily timeless: Homeric wine eternally gleams; we always see with our eyes. Note that "timeless" need not mean anything very fancy: "Water boils at 100° Celsius" is a timeless truth.

But most essential ideas are like ἐϋμμελίω Πριάμοιο, and not true by nature. "Wide-ruling Agamemnon" is not a natural truth. Or consider Εὔμαιε συβῶτα (Swineherd Eumaios). If we take "swineherd" as the epithet, then we wonder, "Can Eumaios, a king's son (*Odyssey* 15.413), be a swineherd by nature?" If we take "Eumaios" as the epithet, we are equally puzzled: can a swineherd be named "Eumaios" by nature? And what about "much-enduring Odysseus?" When we encounter this epithet in the *Iliad*, we think at once of the tradition of his sufferings in the *Odyssey*, not of any quality Odysseus possesses naturally.

What *guarantees* the timeless truth of most essential ideas is tradition. After frequent hearing we accept that "Gerenian horseman Nestor" expresses an essential idea that is always true, even if we are not quite sure what "Gerenian" means. It cannot be true by nature; it must be true by tradition. Of course a member of the original audience might recognize the phrase as traditional. As scholars we might call it traditional because it belongs to the RMPF system on Table I, and Parry's argument that such systems consist mostly of traditional formulae is usually accepted. Other scholars might argue that only the tradition could explain "Gerenian," or reveal why Nestor is called "horseman."[27] Whatever our background or approach, we agree that tradition guarantees the formula's truth. The poets manifestly regard their traditions as repositories of truth: as a recent singer, Salil Ugljanin, put it, "If it weren't true, the singer wouldn't have sung it" ("Virgil's Formularity," 212).

Quoting from an oral singer reminds us that whether our poems were composed in Greek, Serbo-Croatian or Latin, we are studying oral traditions. This does not beg the question: we are not assuming that Homer was an oral poet. Let him be as literate as Virgil or Quintus: simple numerical comparisons between him and countless known oral-epic poets show beyond any reasonable doubt that

[27] In *Il.* 8.78–171 Diomedes assumes that Nestor is a good horseman; but we hear that his horses are slow (104, cf. 23.309) and he loses the reins in 137.

Homer was oral-derived, that he composed in the formulaic oral-epic style. By employing that style, he has invited us to use the model of a singer singing to his audience. Phemios and Demodokos long ago sang about Troy and the gods; they are (doubtless fictional) founders of the tradition of oral epic about Troy. Homer, as he sings (dictates, writes) of Troy and the gods in the oral-epic style, is situating himself in their tradition.

Virgil, Apollonius and Quintus are doing exactly the same thing. They too "sing" about the age of heroes who fought at Troy, or their predecessors; they too are composing in the oral-epic style; they too are situating themselves in the oral tradition, though they draw on other traditions as well. It is a little different when we come to later poets: the Mediaevals knew almost nothing about the ancient Greeks, and Avdo knew nothing of either the Greeks or the western Mediaevals. But they all had oral traditions of their own. And all oral traditions preserve, and affirm the truth of, essential ideas expressed by context-free formulae.

There is much that can be said about the poetry of Homer and Virgil and Avdo that does not require an awareness of their traditions. But now that we have introduced the oral tradition into our argument, we must become more sensitive to the difference between our experience of poem and tradition and the experiences of original and later audiences. At the same time, we must remember that members even of the first audience may have varied considerably in their knowledge of the tradition and their response to the poem: we cannot say with any certainty how the original hearers responded. Of course we can attempt to gain access to the several traditions. Much Southslavic poetry is available. The *Song of Roland* sits alongside other *chansons de geste*. Homer (and others) formed a tradition for Virgil and Quintus. The *Cid*, unfortunately, is the first Spanish epic we have, though it reproduces relatively recent history fairly well. We have no pre-Homeric poems as such, though we can legitimately use the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as a tradition for each other. We can develop arguments that place formulae in the tradition, as we have just done.

We also possess a vehicle that carries us a long way towards assimilating the ancient audiences to ourselves: the common *experience* of frequent repetition. By the time we get to the twenty-fourth *Iliad*, we, as well as those early listeners, have heard πόδας ὠκὺς Ἀχιλλεύς many times. We may not be able to say of line 559, "I recognize

πόδας ὠκὺς ᾿Αχιλλεύς ('Achilleus swift of foot') as a traditional way of summoning Achilleus as a whole to this particular moment." But we can say, "I can recognize πόδας ὠκὺς ᾿Αχιλλεύς, from the poem itself, as a context-free formula expressing an essential idea whose truth can be guaranteed only by the tradition. It summons as much of the traditional figure as I can glean from the rest of the poem. And even the words feel traditional—this is how poetry brings us the hero who is swift of foot."[28]

The freedom to read this way can have remarkable results. Quintus, for instance, in order to locate himself in the oral tradition, employs a large number of context-free formulae expressing essential ideas. In doing this, he can coin—invent—such formulae, and expect us to acknowledge that the truth of his invention is validated by the tradition! His ἐϋμμελίης Αγαμέμνων seems anti-traditional in the extreme; why does he think that wielding a fine ash-spear was essential to Agamemnon? But consider: Quintus did not invent the story he tells in the *Posthomerica*, the last days and fall of Troy; we know that it is traditional. The characters and their deeds are traditional. True, there are details here and there that we do not recognize; they may come from traditions we have lost, but if in some cases we attribute them to Quintus, the poet has no objection. They are not fiction, not poetic invention; from Quintus' point of view Agamemnon's ash spear is as real, as true, as his capture of the city. As Quintus ponders what he has gleaned from the tradition, he concludes that Agamemnon must have carried an ash spear, just as Homer concludes that Troy must have had the governmental form he attributes to it.[29] Neither poet is conscious of altering the truth, and each believes he is telling the truth: not historical truth as we would use the term, but traditional truth (which they probably would not distinguish from historical truth, even though we do). And so, unlikely as it seems at first, ἐϋμμελίης Αγαμέμνων is expressing a

[28] In distinguishing these forms of recognition I lean freely on Foley's discussion of this line, *Immanent Art*, 142–43. Foley speaks of invoking a "mythic figure" and of "more-than textual immanence"; here we are closer to the original audience. But when he outlines Achilleus' "identity in its magnificent entirety," he confines himself, quite properly I think, to the rest of the poem. Members of the original audience may have brought much more to this moment—perhaps even the traditional reason why Achilleus' feet are called "swift"!

[29] Cf. W. M. Sale, "The Government of Troy," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 35 (1994): 5–102.

traditional truth—as we acknowledge after hearing it over and over. Such, we might conclude, is the *intellectual* effect of frequent formulaic repetition.

Formulaic Repetition and Artistic Power

We have already seen that twenty-five percent of the *Odyssey*'s noun-phrasal-formula occurrences are RMPF—i.e. MPF exactly repeated six times or more. Virtually identical percentages can be found in Avdo's *Wedding of Meho*, in the *Song of Roland*, and in the *Song of My Cid*. Why so many repetitions? Quintus has far fewer, Virgil fewer still, and Apollonius just a handful; why so few? Here, of course, is where Parry (slightly revised) could intrude: MPF, because they occur in the major cola and are context-free, make versification easier for oral poets. They need this tool as writing poets do not. I think Parry is right here, and our statistics endorse him, but this is only half the story. Oral poets want to excite their audiences, not bore them; they want, in Avdo's words, to "make them merry." Parry said that ornamental epithets confer nobility, grandeur and ceremony to the poem as a whole, if not the individual passage (*MHV*, 140, 150); but what does this tell us about the emotional effect of repetition as such?

It is doubtless true that some of the aesthetic power of certain RMPF arises as much from their color as anything else: ῥοδοδάκτυλος Ἠώς ("Dawn with rose fingers"), *moja krila zlatna* ("my golden wing"), *el que in buen ora nasco* ("he who was in good hour born"). But not all RMPF are colorful: consider ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι ("saw with his eyes"), τροφὸς Εὐρύκλεια ("nurse Eurykleia"), *li reis Marsilie* ("King Marsilie"), *Petar Dzhenerale* ("General Peter"). The beauty of these formulae must arise from elsewhere.

Three scholars have recently scrutinized Homeric formulae in search of their vitality. For Vivante they "arrest the transient image" (*Homer*, 8). For Foley they are synecdoches: we have just heard ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς evoke the entirety of Achilleus. For Bakker they are epiphanies of heroic figures, staged by certain verb-formulae, so that πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς invites the appearance—*is* the appearance—of Odysseus "out of the timeless world of the myth into the time-frame of the performance" (*Poetry in Speech*, 163).

These insights convey excellently the intellectual and emotional effect of a colorful *formula*, but do not help us with the aesthetics of

repetition. Foley's "repetition as re-creation" (*Immanent Art*, 56–58) is interesting, but does not engage head-on the question of repetition *qua* repetition. Bakker's "routinization" (*Poetry in Speech*, 186–95) is important, but I cannot extract therefrom much insight into repetition's emotional or intellectual effect. Bakker also speaks of "ritual," but without really developing the analogy. Moreover, it is not easy to subject χερσὶν ἔχοντες and ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι, or even Εὔμαιε συβῶτα, to the kind of analysis Foley gives "Achilleus swift of foot." And how they convey or are epiphanies remains elusive.

To understand the art of frequent repetition and the emotions aroused by it, we might begin with the opposite art, the skillful handling of a formula whose parts are exact repetitions but whose whole is not, and which thus occurs only once. Consider ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο, "the man who killed my child," which forms part of Priam's plea for Hektor's body (*Il.* 24.506). It is a normally formed Hainsworth-alteration:[30] strictly, the traditional formulaic epithet ἀνδροφόνοιο is *separated* with παιδο- to give ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο. More subtly, we hear ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο as an *inversion* of παιδὸς ἀνδροφόνοιο ("man-slaying child"). Of course this last phrase does not and for metrical reasons could not occur; we made it up as we listened to Priam. What does occur is Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο; but since we know that the παιδός of the non-occurring παιδὸς ἀνδροφόνοιο is Hektor, we feel that the inversion ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο follows the rules precisely!

We need to hear this inversion: it's not just a Hainsworth-alteration, a formulaic inversion, because the reality of Ἕκτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο has been inverted as well, the man-slayer slain. Not only that, a child has been murdered, an appalling inversion; and though it is not fair to call Achilleus a literal "child-murderer," the manner of Hektor's death, and the ensuing brutish dishonoring of his body, is an inversion of moral commandments laid upon the humane warrior, commandments that Achilleus himself used to obey. And Priam's position as he utters the famous lines is an inversion of the proper and expected:

> I have endured what no one on earth before me has endured;
> I reach to my lips the hand of the man that killed my child.[31]

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[30] For "Hainsworth-alteration" see "Defense," 381.

[31] I prefer this rendering to "reach forth my hand to the lips of the man," which many would argue is the proper rendering of the Greek; it is not Priam's hand, but Achilleus', the killing hand, that has been in sharp focus since line 478.

The world as well as the formulaic words are upside down. But just as the poet made the formula partly by a strict, and partly by a strange interpretation of the rules, so Priam is obeying the old rules in a unique fashion, and we expect Achilleus to obey them too.

It is extremely unlikely that any members of the original audience thought this was a traditional formula, unless they were misled by the juxtaposition of previously repeated sounds. It contains traditional elements, to be sure, and refers to a traditional figure; but far from evoking that figure, it is concentrating on the non-traditional, the supplication by a father of the killer of his child. This is not the timeless; it has never happened before. Our interpretation is particularized, though each element is a repetition, and the whole is a formula—the formulaic opposite of πόδας ὠκὺς 'Αχιλλεύς.

This contrast should help disclose the impact of formulae less colorful than πόδας ὠκὺς 'Αχιλλεύς, starting with their intellectual effect. We are introduced to Eumaios without hearing his name; he is the likable and loyal swineherd (*Od.* 14.37–47).[32] Then (*Od.* 14.55) Homer addresses him in apostrophe, Εὔμαιε συβῶτα. "And in answer you spoke to him, Swineherd Eumaios." The sudden use of proper name and vocative case make the phrase warmly personal and familiar; were it never repeated, we would let "warmth, familiarity, likability and loyalty" stand as its interpretation, just as "inversion" in a variety of senses and feelings was our interpretation of ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο. Perhaps the original audience heard more; but if the phrase were never repeated, we could not recover their experience. As matters stand, however, we hear it again and again, and recognize it for a context-free formula expressing an essential idea: there may be other swineherds (*Od.* 14.24–26, 14.410), but *the* swineherd is Eumaios, the one with a name. Whether or not the formula is literally traditional, we realize that only the tradition can guarantee its truth: it must be that Odysseus' swineherd "really was" Eumaios. As we hear the words over and over, we may even convince ourselves that *they* are traditional: this is how poetry brings us Odysseus' swineherd. To our particularized interpretation of 14.55 we add a contrasting essential-idea interpretation.

Exact repetition thus creates an intellectual parity between "Achilleus

[32] Indeed "Swineherd" is his real name: Εὔμαιος alone is used considerably less often than συβώτης, not to mention ὑφορβός and συφορβός.

swift of foot" and "Swineherd Eumaios." But the formula's emotional effect remains unrevealed. The epithet, whether "swineherd" or "Eumaios," is scarcely vivid; it is not clear what synecdochical force the phrase has, how it can bring more from the tradition than what it already says; and if it is an epiphany, it does not announce a "god or hero" (*Poetry in Speech*, 163). All this is true *a fortiori* of the still less vivid formulae, such as ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι. Intellectually, they do what all RMPF do; but to find their emotional power we must explore a parallel from a seemingly different side of life.

Where else do we hear essential ideas expressed in traditional words repeated over and over? In a house of God, or a similar religious environment, where the repetition is a ritual. We may hear or say the familiar words mechanically; but we may feel intellectual awareness of their meaning, or be deeply moved, or experience epiphany. The words spoken at each renewal of the Tridentine Mass, for instance, are frequent repetitions, some within each Mass, all of them from Mass to Mass.[33] Consider the poignant *Sanguinis mei, novi et aeterni testamenti.* Since each Mass occurs in a different context—for the worshipers, time has passed, and Masses are said all over the world—the words are context-free. They are true in every time and place. They express an essential idea, considerably more profound than those we have discussed: there is no new testament without the blood. This truth, though by no means dependent on tradition, is guaranteed by it and by the repetition. (I speak as one not a Roman Catholic nor Christian herself.) The repetition of the phrase, Mass after Mass, cannot give us all this by itself, but it reinforces our awareness of the Christian tradition and our belief in the truth of the essential idea.

This gives us a reasonably close parallel to the intellectual effect of poetic repetition. Parallels to the emotional effect of poetic *formulae* are also available: the color and vitality of *Sanguinis mei* is palpable; the blood can be experienced as a synecdoche for the whole of Jesus, as man and Christ; the phrase can summon, and be, an epiphany. We are not developing parallels between the emotional effects of repetition as such in poetry and religion; at this point it

[33] I choose from the Tridentine Mass because its traditional quality is familiar even now to so many. The old Book of Common Prayer would work equally well, as would such mantras as *Om ah hum vajra guru padma siddhi hum*, or the better-known *Om mani padme hum.*

is enough to suggest that the rest of the analogy helps us to bring religious ritual to poetry.

It is easy to see how the analogy can help us feel even more deeply the power of the already numinous ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων ("Apollo who works from afar"), but how does it help us with Swineherd Eumaios? I intend no impiety by pointing to certain parallels between Εὔμαιε συβῶτα and *Dominus vobiscum*: neither is as vivid as other phrases in their texts, each addresses "you" and so is warmly personal, and each is a ritual repetition of an essential, timeless, and traditional truth. *Dominus vobiscum* evokes the divine presence, if not literal epiphany ("be with you," not "appear before you"). No one wants to confer the divinity of a god or a great hero upon Eumaios' presence—I suppose because swineherds are swineherds, even one repeatedly called συβώτης ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν ("Swineherd, leader of men"). But let us lend Εὔμαιε συβῶτα the force of an address in religious ritual, of *Dominus vobiscum*, not *Deo de Deo*; let us allow it to call upon *the* swineherd, the swineherd who has a name, to appear before us out of the timeless world of the tradition. An epiphany, an "appearing to" with a genuinely spiritual tone, is a reasonable possibility.

From this we generalize: the emotional power of a less colorful RMPF depends upon repetition as such, and the emotional effect of repetition depends upon the analogy to religious ritual. This remains true with such formulae as ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι ("saw with her eyes"). Upon first hearing ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι we may think ὀφθαλμοῖσι a useless tautology, a metrical filler. With repetition comes the (intellectual) conviction that the phrase conveys an essential idea which can easily lend emphasis to a passage: "actually *saw* it" (*Od.* 16.470), "experienced face-to-face" (*Od.* 4.269). The ritual analogy should add a solemnity which, in the proper context, can create epiphany. Suppose, for instance, that we have read the *Iliad* when we first read the *Odyssey*; so that when we reach 2.155 and encounter ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι, we recognize the formula's essential idea whose emphasis turns "saw with their eyes" into "saw with their *eyes*, really saw it": the Ithacans are hugely aware of the eagles of Zeus. When we also feel the repetition as a religious ritual, the phrase can become an epiphany—not of the eagles or Zeus, but of the event. *This* "saw it with their *eyes*" is the spiritually charged re-appearance of the traditional "saw with their eyes," and brings to this moment all the occasions on which humans really *saw* a sign from the gods. It is

an epiphany of the mystical experience. Of course 2.155 falls in a religious context, and ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι probably would not suggest epiphany in many other passages. It needs help, but the ritual analogy endows the phrase with solemnity everywhere.

To summarize: in oral or oral-derived epic poetry, the intellectual effect of frequent formulaic *repetition*—repeated either from tradition or elsewhere in the poem—is the recognition that the formula is context-free, is an essential-idea formula. The intellectual effect of an essential-idea *formula* (an RMPF) is the recognition of the timeless truth of the idea, and of nature or tradition as the truth's guarantor. (Obviously all these effects are not rigidly separated in the experience!) The *emotional* effect of an RMPF varies with its color. If colorful, it arrests the timeless image (Vivante), and it may be a synecdoche (Foley) that summons the entire figure out of the tradition, or from the rest of the poem, and it may be the epiphany of a god or hero (or a sanctified object) from the "timeless world" (Bakker) of myth and tradition. A less colorful RMPF acquires its emotional effect from repetition as such. And the emotional effect of *repetition* arises from its reproducing the effect of religious ritual: in the poem as in the Mass, repeated phrases express essential ideas whose truth, whether religious, natural or traditional, is guaranteed by tradition.

Statistics[34]

Our revitalization of Parry has set mathematics four tasks: to establish a sensible minimum number for "regular employment"; to show that regularly-employed multi-purposed formulae, RMPF, facilititate versification; to show that therefore (consciously or not) they are used in abundance by oral, but not literate, epic poets, and that the difference is statistically significant; and to show that the composer(s)

[34] What follows must be compendious and inadequate. Some of the scientific analysis of "regularly employed" can be found in my "Homer and the *Roland*" (*Oral Tradition*, 8.1 [1993], 87–141); complex definitions of the various noun-phrase formulae are given in "Defense," along with basic comparisons of percentages—except that there I compared all formulae occurring more than six times, not just RMPF. But much remains unsaid. I do not anticipate publishing anything further along these lines, but I would be happy to supply both data and explanations to anyone wishing them, via aperkins@midwest.net.

of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* used them as freely as oral poets do. Consciously or not, they knew how to use them; they were orally trained. More than this statistics cannot prove.

Most of our data is drawn from seven poems studied in their entirety: Avdo Medjedovich's recent *Wedding of Meho*, known to be orally-composed (12,311 lines); the *Song of Roland* (probably oral, 4,002), and the *Song of My Cid* (probably oral, 3,730); the *Aeneid* (9,896), Apollonius Rhodius' *Argonautica* (5,835), and Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica* (8,772 lines), all three certainly literate; and the *Odyssey* (12,111 lines). Samples from other certainly oral poetry—Arabic, Kazakh and Southslavic—as well as from the *Iliad*, have been used in confirmation.[35]

In all seven poems, noun-phrase MPF (noun-verb or noun-epithet) behave very differently from non-MPF. A great many non-MPF are exactly repeated in their parts but not as a whole, and thus occur just once; fewer, but still a great many, occur just twice. After that the number drops off sharply, and very few are exactly repeated more than six times. The MPF, in contrast, display many fewer formulae occurring just once or twice; but after that the number drops off shallowly, so that we find almost as many occurring 9 times as 6, 15 times as 12, and so on. (In the *Odyssey* quite a few are repeated 20 or 30 times, and some more than that.) Thus in both oral and literate poetry, non-MPF are not frequently repeated, while a good many MPF are repeated very often. The obvious minimum number for regular employment, for designating formulae as RMPF, is six times.[36]

These numbers make it clear that MPF, and most obviously RMPF, can occur freely; they are not constrained, while MPF are. Since all

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[35] I omit Old English, because I lack the expertise to judge between John Foley (*Traditional Oral Epic*, 4 et al.) and Albert Lord (and others; see *The Singer Resumes the Tale* [Ithaca, 1995], 128–30); Foley maintains that Old English formulae are different from Homeric formulae, and Lord disagrees.

[36] The comparative statistics are not affected if we use somewhat more or less than six, and in fact five might be a better minimum for Avdo because of the relative simplicity of the Southslavic verse-form. To avoid any prejudice in the comparisons about to be cited, I used the minimum of six for Avdo. This still leaves a huge gap between him and Quintus, which proves our point. But it leaves Homer displaying a good many more than Avdo of the formulae that mark the oral poet, and this, from the oralist point of view, is a little too good to be true. When we assign a minimum of five to Avdo, Homer still has more occurrences of RMPF—but this can be explained by the technical differences between the verse forms.

noun-phrase formulae are patterns of words with a certain syntax and meter, all formulae possess a kind of order compared to non-formulaic noun-occurrences. But MPF are obviously better able to impose their order—to overcome entropy, the tendency of systems towards less relative order—than non-MPF. And the explanation is equally obvious: MPF are context-free and fall in the commonest cola, so that they can occur virtually any time that a poet wants to say what they mean. (We are not implying that the poet must have been conscious of using formulae!) Lacking one or both of these features, non-MPF are not nearly so able to overcome entropy. And that is why they rarely occur more than six times. If now we translate "overcome entropy" into Parryan language, we say that MPF, and most obviously RMPF, facilitate versification.

To show that oral poets use far more RMPF than literate poets, we compare Avdo's *Wedding* to Quintus' *Posthomerica*. Avdo has 113 different RMPF, Quintus only 22 (extrapolated from 16, since his poem is shorter). Avdo has over five times as many. Avdo has 1,217 RMPF *occurrences*, Quintus 196 (extrapolated): Avdo has over six times as many. The differences are obviously highly significant statistically. They are repeated in the other five poems and are confirmed by the samples from Kazakh, Arabic and other Southslavic poets besides Avdo. In other words, the word-patterns that we identify as RMPF can be used as statistically reliable markers of oral composition.

Comparing now the *Odyssey* to Quintus and Avdo: the *Odyssey* has 126 different RMPF (Avdo 113, Quintus 22); it has 1,512 RMPF occurrences (Avdo 1,217, Quintus 196). Again the difference is statistically highly significant: the *Odyssey* has eight times as many RMPF occurrences as Quintus. It may seem astonishing that Francis Vian, one of Quintus' most acute students, said that Quintus had completely assimilated Homer's style and language (*Recherches*, 250), and that the eminent Homerist Arie Hoekstra thought that Quintus "probably imitated Homer more closely than Homer followed his predecessors."[37] But clearly only statistics can prove these excellent scholars mistaken and Quintus an impostor.

Quintus and Virgil exhibit a great many MPF that occur only once or twice. Indeed Quintus actually displays more different MPF than either Homer or Avdo, which is certainly one reason why he

[37] A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes* (Amsterdam, 1965), 25.

deceived Vian and Hoekstra. Clearly the imitators could have used these MPF more often had they wished. But they apparently did not know how to repeat abundantly without becoming wearisome, and how to achieve the full artistic effect of ritual repetition. Unlike Homer, they were not orally trained.[38]

[38] Many thanks to Ruth Scodel for some helpful corrections and a discussion of entropy; to Janet Watson, Vicki Perkins and Margalit Finkelberg for their corrections and encouragement; and to Anne Perkins—copy editor, referee, and virtual co-author.

CHAPTER FOUR

VARIATIONS: ON THE TEXT OF HOMER

M. D. Usher

The vigorous debate that has arisen in the wake of Gregory Nagy's "evolutionary" scheme for the textual fixation of the Homeric poems needs an infusion of new evidence if it is not to take on the appearance of an argument about intellectual succession vis-à-vis Albert Lord, the co-father of modern Homeric studies. The controversy, between Nagy and Richard Janko especially,[1] centers on the nature of the textual variants (and plus-verses) one finds in the papyri, the scholia (particularly Aristarchus' readings), the testimonia, and the medieval manuscripts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Nagy maintains that, in principle, we should view such variants as potentially "authentic," and considers the attempt to recover the "true" or "original" reading in any given passage misleading, if not misguided. "The empirical methods of comparative philology and the study of oral tradition," he writes, "can be used only to defend a variant reading as traditional,

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[1] Janko dedicates a recent article, in which he refutes Nagy's position, to the memory of Albert Lord (R. Janko, "The Homeric Poems as Oral Dictated Texts," *Classical Quarterly* 48 [1998]: 1–13), and emphasizes his many personal conversations with Lord over the last ten years of his life in his review of Nagy's chapter on Homeric scholia (in R. Janko, Review of *A New Companion to Homer*, ed. Ian Morris and Barry Powell, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 98.5.20 [electronic version; answered point-for-point by Nagy, "Nagy on Janko on Morris/Powell," *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 98.7.14]); cf. also his trenchant review of Nagy's *Poetry as Performance* in *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 118 (1998): 206–7. Nagy's *Homeric Questions*, one of two recent books that spawned this debate, is also emphatically dedicated to Lord, in relation to whose work his own contributions are said to stand as "extensions" (*Homeric Questions* [Austin, 1996], 10–11). Elsewhere, accused of rejecting Lord's theory of a dictated text, Nagy has publicly disputed other critics' implicit claims to succession ("Nagy on Powell on Nagy," *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 97.4.18). In contrasting here the mutually exclusive views of two mutually exceptional Homerists, I would like to invoke Nagy's call for "respect for the positive efforts of others" and for the need to "transcend the kind of internal battles in classical scholarship where the intensity of contentiousness over the rights and wrongs of interpretation" runs the risk of avoiding "new or different methods," or leads "to narrow and . . . oversimplified approaches to complex problems" (Nagy, *Homeric Questions*, 7).

not to establish it as the superior reading—let alone the correct reading." Nagy continues, stating his position positively thus:

> On the basis of comparative studies of textual variation in manuscript traditions that are based on oral traditions, these same methods can be used to defend variant readings that happen to be attested only in manuscripts judged inferior by editors, ancient or modern.[2]

This view is at odds with the dictation theory of Janko and others, who tend to reject Alexandrian readings as "conjectures" or "corrections," and weakly attested variants in the manuscript tradition as "corruptions."[3] When faced with some metrical or semantic anomaly in the text—the very sort of thing ancient editors were keen to eliminate—Janko argues that "a scrupulous editor of an orally dictated text," should, on the principle of *lectio difficilior*, leave such blemishes alone in cases where "the orally dictated imperfection is . . . faithfully preserved by the manuscripts."[4] For Janko, because the poems were taken down by dictation from an ἀοιδός (*circa* 750 B.C.E. for the *Iliad*, a little later for the *Odyssey*), the goal of the modern editor should be to determine and preserve the reading of the dictated archetype (which he believes to stand behind the relative coherence of the medieval vulgate). For Nagy, since the historical context for the textual fixation of the Homeric poems is an era of performing rhapsodes, not ἀοιδοί,[5] the editor should acknowledge and seek to represent the variation, contraction, and expansion that oral and orally-derived poetry undergoes over time in the process of recomposition during performance. Even Aristarchan "conjectures" should be admitted as potentially authentic variants if they are in accord with what we know of oral poetics.[6]

In this paper I would like to defend the principle behind Nagy's position. The new evidence I put forward comes from the *Homerocentones*, a long biblical pastiche poem composed entirely of Homeric verses

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[2] Gregory Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1996), 117–18.

[3] Janko counts thirty-three such conjectures in the approximately 3,000 lines of books 13–16 of the *Iliad*, listed in *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 4: books 13–16 (Cambridge, 1992), 26, and discussed ad loc.; cf. Janko, "Dictated Texts," 9.

[4] Janko, "Dictated Texts," 9; cf. further his remarks on πᾶσι vs. δαῖτα at *Il.* 1.5 (Review of *New Companion to Homer*).

[5] Though it must be said that Nagy resists making any rigid historical distinction between ἀοιδοί and ῥαψῳδοί (*Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 97.4.18; cf. *Poetry as Performance*, 59–78), a view criticized by Janko (Review of *Poetry as Performance*, 206).

[6] Nagy's model is sketched in full in *Homeric Questions*, 29–112 and *Poetry as Performance*, 107–14.

by the Theodosian Empress Eudocia in the fifth century C.E.[7] I have argued elsewhere in detail that Eudocia's poem, composed in the residually oral culture of late antiquity, reveals to us a literate poet-rhapsode, influenced by the techniques of declamation, who is fluent in the habits of Homeric composition, at both the verbal and thematic levels.[8] Here I would like to expand that discussion slightly and suggest that, ὕστερον πρότερον Ὁμηρικῶς, the Centos can shed light on Homeric questions proper, especially the question of textual variation within the tradition.

To broach the question of variation, we must begin with repetition, for Janko uses this feature of Homeric poetry as a criterion to argue that the *Iliad* is an orally-dictated text. The repeated word ἀμβρόσι- in short space at *Il.* 14.170–77, for example, is said to be a "vestige of dictation":[9]

> **ἀμβροσίῃ** μὲν πρῶτον ἀπὸ χροὸς ἱμερόεντος
> λύματα πάντα κάθηρεν, ἀλείψατο δὲ λίπ' ἐλαίῳ
> **ἀμβροσίῳ** ἑανῷ, τό ῥα οἱ τεθυώμενον ἦεν·
> τοῦ καὶ κινυμένοιο Διὸς ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ
> ἔμπης ἐς γαῖαν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἵκετ' ἀυτμή.
> τῷ ῥ' ἥ τε χρόα καλὸν ἀλειψαμένη ἰδὲ χαίτας
> πεξαμένη χερσὶ πλοκάμους ἔπλεξε φαεινοὺς
> καλοὺς **ἀμβροσίους** ἐκ κράατος ἀθανάτοιο.
> ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' **ἀμβρόσιον** ἑανὸν ἕσαθ', ὅν οἱ 'Αθήνη . . .

Such repetition, Janko observes, "can be discerned wherever one looks" in Homer. But it does not follow that this is a tell-tale sign of dictation. Indeed, this feature is pervasive in the Centos as well, where the repetition of key-words is a mnemonic device that aids in (re-)composition.[10] Take, for example, the repetition at close quarters of the words δαιν- and δαιτ- in the Centos' Wedding at Cana

[7] Of the several Homeric centos ("patchworks" or "stitchings") extant from antiquity, Eudocia's is the longest at 2,400 lines. The remarks here are based on the new text of the poem edited by myself (*Eudocia. Homerocentones* [Leipzig and Stuttgart, 1999]). On the cento form in general see G. Salanitro, "Osidio Geta e la poesia centonaria," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 3.34.3 (Berlin, 1997). For a medieval eclogue of Homeric centos (incorporating some of Eudocia's work) see A.-L. Rey, *Centons Homériques*. Sources Chrétiennes 437 (Paris, 1998).

[8] M. D. Usher, *Homeric Stitchings: The Homeric Centos of the Empress Eudocia* (Lanham, Md., 1998).

[9] Janko, "Dictated Texts," 8. Jasper Griffin, on the other hand, condemns such repetition as un-Homeric in the poems of the Epic Cycle "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 97 [1977]: 49–51.

[10] Usher, *Homeric Stitchings*, 106–11.

episode (571–77), which is populated by lines drawn from various feast and sacrifice type-scenes:

οἱ δ' ἕως μὲν σῖτον ἔχον καὶ οἶνον ἐρυθρόν,	*Od.* 12.327
δαίνυντ'· οὐδέ τι θυμὸς ἐδεύετο **δαιτὸς** ἐΐσης	*Il.* 1.468
δαιτυμόνες δ' ἀνὰ δώματ' ἀκουάζονται ἀοιδοῦ,	*Od.* 9.7
πίνοντες καὶ ἔδοντες· ἐπηετανὸν γὰρ ἔχεσκον	*Od.* 7.99
δαίνυνθ' ἑζόμενοι· ἐπὶ δ' ἀνέρες ἐσθλοὶ ὄροντο	*Od.* 3.471
οἶνον οἰνοχεύντες ἐνὶ χρυσέοις δεπάεσσιν.	*Od.* 3.472
ὣς οἱ μὲν **δαίνυντο** καθ' ὑψερεφὲς μέγα δῶμα.	*Od.* 4.15

Or compare this Cento scene, where Christ, cast as a furious Homeric warrior, confronts the Demoniac of Gerasa (948–56). Here the key-words are μένος and—used somewhat catachrestically—δαιμόνιε:

τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν, ὅ μευ ἔτλης ἀντίον ἐλθεῖν;	*Il.* 21.150
δυστήνων δέ τε παῖδες ἐμῷ **μένει** ἀντιόωσι	*Il.* 21.151
δαιμόνιε, σχεδὸν ἐλθέ· τίη δειδίσσεαι οὕτως;	*Il.* 13.810
δαιμόνιε, φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν **μένος**, οὐδ' ἐλεαίρεις	*Il.* 6.407
ἄνδρα γέροντα, δύῃ ἀρήμενον, ἥ μιν ἱκάνει,	*Od.* 18.81
καὶ μάλα τειρόμενον καὶ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πένθος ἔχοντα.	*Od.* 7.218
ὥς θην καὶ σὸν ἐγὼ λύσω **μένος**, εἰ κέ μευ ἄντα	*Il.* 17.29
στήῃς· ἀλλά σ' ἔγωγ' ἀναχωρήσαντα κελεύω	*Il.* 17.30
ἐς πληθὺν ἰέναι, μηδ' ἀντίος ἵστασ' ἐμεῖο.	*Il.* 17.31

Such repetition does not make Eudocia's poem an orally-dictated text—for no other reason than that she is a literate person of the fifth century C.E. and is recombining elements of a text that was more or less fixed by her time. What it does show, however, is that Eudocia has internalized an important feature of the Homeric langue and has reproduced it in her poem. Several years before Milman Parry's revolutionary ideas were first published, and long before they took hold in the scholarly community, Marcel Jousse drew attention to the use of key-words as a mnemonic device in oral and orally-derived poetry, and recognized that "the prior knowledge of just one single word of an oral recitative has [the] power to conjure up an entire block" for the performing poet or cantor.[11] D. Gary Miller has called this kind of repetition within a short space in Homer "a fact of cognitive operation,"[12] and the observations of Jousse and

[11] Marcel Jousse, *The Oral Style*, trans. E. Sienaert and R. Whitaker (New York, 1990), 211–25.

[12] D. Gary Miller, *Improvisation, Typology, Culture, and the "The New Orthodoxy": How Oral Is Homer?* (Washington D.C., 1982), 45.

Miller are now corroborated by David Rubin's massive collation of psychological studies of "associative networks" and their role in activating the memory of epic poets and ballad singers.[13] Not unlike the ancient rhapsodes, the earliest transmitters of the poems (and, for all we know, "Homer" himself, standing as he does at the very end of the purely oral tradition), Eudocia stitches related lines together based on shared elements. The repeated words serve as cues for the poet as she moves from one line to the next in the process of composition on a set theme.

Eudocia's competence in Homeric poetics is even more apparent in the many semantic and grammatical changes her Homeric lines must undergo in order to fit their new biblical context. Such accommodation produces lines where as few as one or two minor elements are changed, to situations where two distinct half-lines are combined, to instances in which a given Cento line has no exact match in Homer.[14] All told, Eudocia's Centos contain 139 variant readings reported, but not printed, by Monro-Allen in the Oxford texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and they contain twenty whole lines with no exact match in Homer, but whose phrasing resembles lines found in our poems.[15] They occasionally preserve other significant variants not widely diffused through the tradition.[16] *That* the Centos contain variants is of course important for our understanding of the text of Homer; but, from the point of view of textual transmission and the

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[13] David Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (Oxford and New York, 1995), 31–35. On repetition in Homer see also D. Fehling, *Die Wiederholungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias* (Berlin, 1969), 164; E. Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung* (Halle, 1937), 54, 64; and, especially, B. Peabody, *The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Ancient Greek Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's* Works and Days (Albany, 1975), 31, 184–206, 233–36. On memory systems in classical antiquity, see now Jocelyn Penny Small, *The Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London and New York, 1997).

[14] For a detailed discussion of accommodation in the Centos and the sigla used to represent it in my edition, see Usher, *Homeric Stitchings*, 35–56, and Usher, *Homerocentones*, vii–viii. These sigla are not reproduced here; the interested reader is invited to consult the above works for further information about the passages in question.

[15] Listed in the appendix of Usher, *Homerocentones*, many of which are discussed in Usher, *Homeric Stitchings*.

[16] Many of these are reported by M. L. West in his new edition of the *Iliad* (*Homeri* Ilias, Volumen Prius [Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1998], x). I have *per litteras* the following instances: ἑοῖο for ἑῆος at 1.393, τε for δέν at 2.89, καμόντες for καμόντας at 3.278, στήσαντες for πίνοντες at 8.232, et al.

relationship of the received text of the poems to the performance and mnemonic traditions that perpetuated them, it is more important that we understand the full range of reasons *why* the Centos contain such variants. Eudocia's poetic practice in this regard sheds considerable light on variation in the Homeric texts themselves.

In many instances, Cento variation is due to the exigencies brought on by the use of Homeric verses to express biblical themes. Lines containing Homeric names, for example, are passed over, and cola containing them are accommodated with other Homeric tags.[17] The person, number, tense, and case of nouns and verbs are also freely adapted wherever necessary.[18] Many times the substitutions involve interchangeable words or phrases, a type of variation often found in the "wild" papyri[19] and in the ancient quotations. Plato's citation of *Il.* 24.80–2 (*Ion* 538d1–3), for example, is representative of the types of variation found in the Centos

> ἡ δὲ μολυβδαίνῃ ἰκέλη ἐς βυσσὸν **ἵκανεν**,
> ἥ τε κατ᾽ ἀγραύλοιο βοὸς κέρας **ἐμμεμαυῖα**
> ἔρχεται ὠμηστῇσι **μετ᾽** ἰχθύσι **πῆμα** φέρουσα

where one synonymous verb, strongly localized at the end of the line, ἵκανεν, is found in place of the reading of the manuscript tradition, ὄρουσεν, also strongly localized at line-end; one synonymous and roughly homophonous participle (ἐμμεμαυῖα) is substituted for another (ἐμβεβαυῖα), again at line-end; the preposition μετά is substituted for the Homeric ἐπί and the noun πῆμα for the Homeric reading, κῆρα—neither with any appreciable semantic gain. Jules Labarbe concluded that many such discrepancies between Plato's citations and our received text of Homer are due to an "association psychologique" of familiar words and phrases, which he suggests reflects "rhapsodic" habits of composition.[20] We can be even more specific and say that the variants in this particular example involve synonyms, homophones, and strongly localized word-types, what Russo identifies as various kinds of "structural" formulae.[21]

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[17] See further Usher, *Homeric Stitchings*, 43–46.

[18] Usher, *Homeric Stitchings*, 38–39.

[19] M. Haslam, "Homeric Papyri and Transmission of the Text" in *A New Companion to Homer*, ed. Ian Morris and Barry Powell (Leiden, 1997), 97.

[20] *L'Homère de Platon* (Paris, 1949), 101–20.

[21] Joseph Russo, "Is 'Oral' or 'Aural' Composition the Cause of Formulaic Style?" in *Oral Literature and the Formula*, ed. R. S. Shannon and B. A. Stolz (Ann Arbor, 1976), 31–37.

That homophonic word and phrase substitutions are an important feature of Homer's oral style was recognized by Parry, whose ideas have been developed along quite different lines by Nagler,[22] Hainsworth,[23] and recently Matthew Clark,[24] who provide many examples. Not to reduplicate their evidence, let me simply call attention to *Il.* 8.280, a line used in the Centos (2283), which illustrates how readily a given Homeric line can be adapted with homophonic words or phrases to suit new contexts. The verse in *Iliad* Book 8 reads στῆ δὲ παρ' **αὐτὸν ἰὼν**, καί μιν πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπε. At *Od.* 17.414, however, we find the same line but with the name 'Αντίνοον substituted for the phrase αὐτὸν ἰών. Like the *Odyssey* poet here, Eudocia also frequently substitutes homophones for words that do not fit the required sense or syntax of the passage she is composing: for example, the substitution of γάρ for ἄρ and vice versa (e.g. 777 = *Od.* 15.134, 1010 = *Od.* 19.408, 1689 = *Il.* 22.356, the last two of which are already *variae lectiones* in the manuscript tradition); the Centos' substitution of σώματα for the Homeric δώματα in the phrase κατὰ σώματα, used to describe the strength of Judas (1696 = *Od.* 21.372); ἠρνήσατο for ἠρήσατο at 1796 (= *Il.* 17.568) which makes Peter "deny" in the Garden of Gethsemane with a Homeric line that describes Menelaos "praying" to Athena on the battlefield; or λίς substituted for the indefinite pronoun τις (1529 = *Od.* 4.535), which makes a rather colorless Homeric simile more vivid.[25]

Labarbe concluded from his study that the text of Homer in Plato's time was not yet fixed. Van der Valk's reading of Labarbe impelled him to posit a double transmission of the Homeric poems, one oral, the other written.[26] This scenario actually falls within the bounds of the model proposed by Nagy, who, contrary to Janko's assertions,[27] does allow for the co-existence of written texts alongside living performance traditions in which expansion, contraction, and variation

[22] Michael Nagler, "Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 98 (1967): 269–311. Using Chomskyan terms, Nagler calls such substitutions "allomorphs of a single [mental] template."

[23] J. B. Hainsworth, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary*, vol. 3: books 9–12 (Cambridge, 1993), 15–16, with many examples, and some reservations about Nagler's ideas.

[24] Matthew Clark, *Out of Line: Homeric Composition Beyond the Hexameter* (Lanham, Md., 1997), 10–11, who revises and expands on Nagler's views.

[25] For λίς in Homeric lion similes, cf. *Il.* 11.239, 17.109, 18.318.

[26] As pointed out by Janko (Review of *Poetry as Performance*, 206, with references), correcting Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 145.

[27] Review of *Poetry as Performance*, 207.

could—and did—occur.[28] The question that seems to divide them is a question of emphasis: Nagy is more interested in the trajectory of performance (seeing many instances of it in our written texts), Janko in the originary moment, the first—and for him definitive—writing down of the poems. The Centos provide perhaps a middle ground, for they attest to the fruitful interaction between written and oral at a time when there is no doubt that the text had become fixed and circulated primarily—if not exclusively—in manuscript form. But there is more.

Of the twenty Cento lines with no exact equivalent in our versions of the Homeric poems, several sound as if they might be distant echoes of "authentic" lines in the sense defined by Nagy. Take for instance verse 449, used to describe the Baptism of Jesus:

ἦμος δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐλούσατο ἐν ποταμῷ βαθυδίνῃ

In Eudocia, this line is followed immediately by *Od.* 6.228 unchanged (ἀμφὶ δὲ εἵματα ἕσσαθ᾽ ἅ οἱ πόρε πάρθενος ἀδμής), where the naked Odysseus, having washed off the sea brine in a nearby stream, is handed a cloak by Nausikaa. Given the context, Cento line 449 approximates the content of a verse like *Od.* 6.210 (**λούσατέ τ᾽ ἐν ποταμῷ**/, ὅθ᾽ ἐπὶ σκέπας ἔστ᾽ ἀνέμοιο) or 6.224 (αὐτὰρ ὁ **ἐκ ποταμοῦ** χρόα **νίζετο** δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς). Eudocia in fact could have easily used the former line in her passage by changing (as she often does) the person of the verb—here from second-person plural imperative to third-person singular indicative (i.e. λούσατ**ό** τ᾽ . . .)—but instead she conflates various Homeric phrases to form a new line that does not appear in the poems as we have them. Still, her practice is for the most part consistent with Homeric habits of composition:[29] the collocation ποταμὸς βαθυδίνης, for example, occurs five times in the poems, always at line-end, always in the nominative case, each time referring to the Xanthos-Skamandros river (*Il.* 20.73)—specifically to Achilleus' battle with it (*Il.* 21.143, 212, 228, 329).[30] In the *Odyssey*,

[28] Namely in Nagy's periods 3 and 4 (*Poetry as Performance*, 110).

[29] There are, it will be noticed, some un- or post-Homeric features as well, some of which are attributable perhaps to the shift from quantitative accent to stress accent in Eudocia's time: The particle chain in the first colon is unprecedented and unmetrical (the α in ἄρα being short; perhaps we should read ἦμος δή ῥ᾽ ὅ here?), there is hiatus after ἐλούσατο, and the line contains no real caesura.

[30] That Eudocia may have been thinking of the Skamandros (the Homeric river *par excellence*) in her adaptation is suggested by her use of *Il.* 21.382 (ἄψορρον δ᾽ ἄρα κῦμα κατέσσυτο καλὰ ῥέεθρα) in line 454.

the poet adapts this Iliadic phrase to a different river to suit a new context and uses the dative form of βαθυδίνης at line-end in a unique phrase to modify Okeanos—(ἐπ') Ὠκεανῷ βαθυδίνῃ (*Od.* 10.511). In principle Eudocia's practice differs very little, if at all, from the *Odyssey* poet's. Both recombine familiar elements to produce an appropriate line for their respective needs.

At Cento line 438a we find another verse whose source is mysterious, but whose form and context in the Centos, like the example above, is consistent with Homeric habits of composition. The Cento passage in question (437–39) describes the recognition of Jesus by John the Baptist with a run of lines from *Odyssey* Book 24:

	κύσσε δέ μιν περιφὺς ἐπιάλμενος ἠδὲ προσηύδα,	*Od.* 24.320
	"ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ νόστησας ἐελδομένοισι μάλ' ἡμῖν,	*Od.* 24.400
438a	**πολλὰ μάλ' εὐχομένοισι καὶ ἐλπομένοισι ἰδέσθαι**,	?
	οὖλέ τε καὶ μέγα χαῖρε, θεὸς δέ τοι ὄλβια δοίη."	*Od.* 24.402

Is Cento verse 438a a verse that was known to Eudocia, but has not been transmitted in our manuscripts or the papyri?[31] In Homer, lines 400 and 402 are spoken by Laertes' slave Dolios as he recognizes Odysseus. In the *Odyssey* we now possess, line 400 is followed by the verse οὐδ' ἔτ' ὀϊομένοισι, θεοὶ δέ σε ἤγαγον αὐτοί, which states that Odysseus' return is a surprise, that neither Dolios, nor anyone on Laertes' farm ever expected him to return (οὐδ' ἔτ' ὀϊομένοισι). In Eudocia, by contrast, her line 438a expresses the prayerful longing and hope of a people to see the arrival of their long-awaited king (the Messiah), yet it is perfectly Homeric in both form and sentiment. As to the sentiment, if in fact the Cento text represents some lost ancient rendition of the *Odyssey* passage, Dolios would be expressing his confidence in the expectations raised by Penelope, who was the one who sent him to the farm in the first place to inform old Laertes of Telemachos' voyage to find news of Odysseus (*Od.* 4.735–36). Thus, to have Dolios speak this line is arguably consistent with the *Odyssey* poet's fondness for having faithful subordinate characters recognize Odysseus before the members of his own family do (e.g., the dog Argos, the nurse Eurykleia, the swineherd Eumaios). Or is this line Eudocia's own composition? If so, it follows roughly the same

[31] Stephanus, in his 1578 edition of the poem, omits this line, though the best manuscript of the Centos, Iviron 4464 (Mt. Athos), contains it. It is also found (though displaced) in the Homeric cento eclogue edited by Rey (*Centons Homériques*, 198).

contours as the Homeric line 401, where a dative plural participle modifies the pronoun ἡμῖν in the previous line. Moreover, while the core of this verse, the phrase εὐχομένοισι καὶ ἐλπομένοισι ἰδέσθαι, has no exact parallel, its structure is completely Homeric, that is, it involves familiar Homeric words and word-types in familiar metrical positions.[32] And what is to be made of that fact that Eudocia's mystery line appears in the context of *Odyssey* Book 24, whose authenticity and authorship has been in question from the time of Aristarchus himself ?

These very questions raise what I take to be Nagy's central point, that a line like Eudocia's 438a—indeed any of the lines of the *Odyssey*'s final scenes—falls within the bounds of possibility and propriety in terms of oral poetics and performance, as do the variants found in our written texts—be they manuscripts, papyri, testimonia, or scholia. Nagy considers his recent work on the transmission/fixation of the text of Homer "the groundwork for a multitext edition" of a poetry he understands to be essentially multiform.[33] Such an edition "would . . . not only . . . report variant readings but also . . . relate them wherever possible to different periods in the history of textual transmission."[34] West's magisterial new *Iliad* comes nearer this goal than any previous edition.[35] The *Homerocentones*, where Homeric verses

[32] For εὐχομένοισι cf. ἡμῖν εὐχομένοισι τελευτῆσαι τάδε ἔργα (*Od.* 3.56), and note that the participle modifies ἡμῖν, as it does in the Cento passage; for καὶ ἐλπομένοισι ἰδέσθαι, cf. αἰσχρὸν γὰρ τόδε γ' ἐστὶ **καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι** (*Il.* 2.119, 22.305; Od. 11.76, 21,255, 24.433); for the pattern -οισι + -οισι + verb, cf. ἥ τε καὶ ἐσσομένοισι μετ' ἀνθρώποισι πέλεται (*Il.* 3.287 = 460); for the word ἐλπομενο- in this *sedes*, cf. τρὶς δὲ μεθῆκε βίης, ἐπι**ελπόμενος** τό γε θυμῷ (*Od.* 21.126). For the first half of the line cf. especially *Il.* 9.183: **πολλὰ μάλ' εὐχομένῳ** γαιηόχῳ ἐννοσιγαίῳ (noted by A.-M. Alfieri, "La tecnica compositiva nel centone di Eudocia Augusta." *Sileno* 14 [1988]: 151). On the formula εὔχομαι ἐλπόμενος and the Zenodotean word order of that collocation we find approximated here—ἔλπομαι εὐχόμενος (at *Il.* 8.526)—see Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 133, who cites L. Muellner, *The Meaning of Homeric EYXOMAI through its Formulas*, Innsbrucker Beitrage zur Sprachwissenschaft 13 (Innsbruck, 1976), 58–62. Note also the homophony of ἐελδομένοισι in line 400 and καὶ ἐλπομένοισι in 401, and the epanaleptic repetition of μάλα, both of which perhaps aided in the retrieval/fabrication of this line in this context.

[33] Nagy, *Poetry as Performance,* 109. The multitext edition is currently being prepared under the auspices of the Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, D.C. On the question of whether the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were ever multiforms in antiquity, see M. Finkelberg, "The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiformity in Oral and Written Tradition," *Classical Philology* 95 (2000):1–11, who argues that they were not.

[34] Nagy, *Poetry as Performance*, 113.

[35] For the editorial principles involved, see his article "The Textual Criticism and Editing of Homer" in *Editing Texts*, ed. Glenn W. Most (Göttingen, 1998), 94–110. See, however, the reservations expressed by Nagy, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 00.19.12.

are used to convey non-Homeric themes, represent the extreme in multiformity. But Eudocia's poem is important for Homeric studies nonetheless, as it provides a unique opportunity to observe a literate poet-cum-rhapsode interacting with her repertoire. The variations that her Centos contain are of special heuristic value, for they reflect, or perhaps refract, the process whereby an ancient performer of Homeric verse could stitch together a new song out of old, familiar material—material that circulated in the form of texts. The Centos invite us to look away from the Serbo-Croatian parallel, whence the dictation theories of Lord, Janko, and others derive, and ask what may be gained from an investitgation of the reception and reuse of Homer in a poem like Eudocia's. I think much, in every way, if we have ears to hear.[36]

[36] I would like to thank an anonymous referee for helpful comments on this paper.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE WISDOM AND WIT OF MANY: THE ORALITY OF GREEK PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

André Lardinois

The analysis of proverbial expressions has figured prominently in recent ethno- and sociolinguistic studies of both oral and literate societies,[1] but classical studies have been slow to follow suit. Although classicists showed considerable interest in ancient Greek proverbial expressions before the Second World War,[2] no detailed studies have appeared since then.[3] One result of the recent ethnolinguistic studies of proverbial expressions is the realization that such expressions can take many different forms. Focusing on the way Greek proverbial expressions were composed, I will examine in this chapter the forms that these expressions took in ancient Greece.

A Description of Greek Proverbial Expressions

There are many different terms for proverbial expressions in ancient Greek. For instance, Homer and the other archaic Greek poets refer

[1] For detailed bibliographies, see W. Mieder, *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography* (New York, 1982); W. Mieder, *International Proverb Scholarship: An Annotated Bibliography, Supplement* (New York, 1990); the journal *Proverbium*, and, most recently, the on-line journal *De Proverbio* (http://info.utas.edu.au/docs/flonta/).

[2] Most importantly H. Koch, *Quaestiones de proverbiis apud Aeschylum, Sophoclem, Euripidem*, vol. 1 (Königsberg, 1887) and vol. 2 (Bartenstein, 1892); F. Hofinger, *Euripides und seine Sentenzen*, vol. 1 (Erlangen, 1895) and vol. 2 (Landau i.d. Pfalz, 1899); P. Martin, *Studien auf dem Gebiete des griechischen Sprichwortes* (Plauen, 1889); T. Stickney, *Les sentences dans la poésie grecque d'Homère à Euripide* (Paris, 1903); E. Wolf, *Sentenz und Reflexion bei Sophokles* (Leipzig, 1910); P. Friedländer, "ΥΠΟΘΗΚΑΙ," *Hermes* 48 (1913): 558–616; E. Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung* (Halle, 1937); H. Bischoff, *Gnomen Pindars* (Würzburg, 1938); K. Bielohlawek, *Hypotheke und Gnome: Untersuchungen über die griechische Weisheitsdichtung der vorhellenistischen Zeit*, Philologus Supplementband 32, Heft 3 (Leipzig, 1940).

[3] Some notable exceptions are J. F. Kindstrand, "The Greek Concept of Proverbs," *Eranos* 76 (1978): 71–85; J. Russo, "The Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," *Journal of Folklore Research* 20 (1983): 121–30, and "Prose Genres for the Performance

to some proverb-like expressions with the words ἔπος, λόγος or αἶνος.[4] The problem with these terms, however, is that they are used for a variety of speech genres and not just proverbial expressions. In the course of the fifth and fourth century B.C.E., perhaps under the influence of the sophists, some new terms for proverbial expressions, including παροιμία, ὑποθήκη, ἀπόφθεγμα and γνώμη, were introduced into the Greek language.[5] Of these four terms γνώμη (gnome, gnomai) seems to be the most comprehensive. Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* defines a gnome as: "a statement not concerning particulars, such as what kind of a man Iphicrates is, but general, and not about all things, such as that straight is the opposite of crooked, but about all such things as are actions, and whether they are to be pursued or avoided."[6] Aristotle proceeds to quote a number of examples from Homer and the other Greek poets.[7] I will argue that these gnomai were, at least until the fourth century B.C.E., part of a living tradition in which every performance was a re-creation of the saying, very much like epic verse. They are, like epic verses, "coined"[8] with the help of traditional formulae and themes.

Adopting Aristotle's definition, I identified over twelve-hundred

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of Traditional Wisdom in Ancient Greece," in *Poet, Public and Performance in Ancient Greece*, ed. L. Edmunds and R. W. Wallace (Baltimore, 1997), 49–64; A. Lardinois, "Wisdom in Context: The Use of Gnomic Statements in Archaic Greek Poetry" (Ph.D. diss. Princeton University, 1995), and "Modern Paroemiology and the Use of Gnomai in Homer's *Iliad*," *Classical Philology* 92 (1997): 213–34; and Y. Z. Tzifopoulos, "Proverbs in Menander's Dyskolos: The Rhetoric of Popular Wisdom," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995): 169–77, but with the exception of Lardinois, "Wisdom in Context," these are all articles.

[4] ἔπος: *Il.* 15.206, Theognis 16, Pindar *I.* 6.67; λόγος: Alcaeus fr. 360, Pindar *O.* 2.22, *P.* 3.80 etc.; αἶνος: *Il.* 23.795, Euripides Fr. 508 N[2], cf. T. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin, 1872), 363. Heraclitus (Fr. B34 D.–K./2 M) once uses the word φάτις for what appears to be a proverb: see M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus Editio Maior: Greek Text with a Short Commentary* (Merida, 1967), ad loc.

[5] See Kindstrand "The Greek Concept of Proverbs," Lardinois "Wisdom in Context," 13–19, and Russo "Prose Genres".

[6] ἔστι δὴ γνώμη ἀπόφανσις, οὐ μέντοι οὔτε περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον, οἷον ποῖός τις Ἰφικράτης, ἀλλὰ καθόλου, καὶ οὐ περὶ πάντων, οἷον ὅτι τὸ εὐθὺ τῷ καμπύλῳ ἐναντίον, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὅσων αἱ πράξεις εἰσί, καὶ αἱρετὰ ἢ φευκτά ἐστι πρὸς τὸ πράττειν—*Rhet.* 1394a21–26 Kassel.

[7] For example, *Il.* 12.243 and 18.309a = *Rhet.* 1395a13–14, 15, *Cypria* Fr. 25 EGF = *Rhet.* 1395a16–17, Euripides *Medea* 294–95 = *Rhet.* 1394a29–30.

[8] This is Aristotle's term for the creation of gnomai: γνωμοτύποι—*Rhet.* 1395a7, cf. Aristophanes *Th.* 55, *Eq.* 1379, *Ra.* 877, *Nu.* 952. Aristotle, however, also refers to a practice, perhaps becoming more frequent in his days, of "using frequently quoted and common gnomai" (χρῆσθαι . . . ταῖς τεθρυλημέναις καὶ κοιναῖς γνώμαις—*Rhet.* 1395a10–11).

gnomai in the works of the archaic Greek poets.[9] Very few of these sayings are repeated verbatim. Instead, the texts display a variety of renditions of the same basic thought; for example, *Od.* 7.294: αἰεὶ γάρ τε νεώτεροι ἀφραδέουσιν ("For always thoughtless are youngsters") expresses the same sentiment as *Il.* 3.108: αἰεὶ δ' ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν φρένες ἠερέθονται ("Always flighty are the minds of young men"), but in different words. Subsequent analysis of such gnomic statements reveals that they are made up of a limited number of formulae and lexical elements. One recurring syntactical formula found in many Greek gnomai is (οὐ) χρή + infinitive ("One must . . ."). This formation is found for example at *Il.* 2.24: οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εὕδειν βουληφόρον ἄνδρα, at *Od.* 15.74: χρὴ ξεῖνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν, ἐθέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν, and at Alcaeus Fr. 335.1: οὐ χρῆ κάκοισι θῦμον ἐπιτρέπην.[10] Another often recurring formula is ἄμεινον + infinitive ("It is better to . . ."), as at *Il.* 1.274: ἐπεὶ πείθεσθαι ἄμεινον, *Od.* 22.104: τετευχῆσθαι γὰρ ἄμεινον, and Hesiod *WD* 314: τὸ ἐργάζεσθαι ἄμεινον.[11] Lexical elements typically found in Greek gnomai are the so-called gnomic aorist and epic τε. Together with the syntactical formulae they form a special diction which enables a speaker to create a gnomic saying in performance.

Besides conforming to such structural patterns, most gnomai also conform to certain standard themes, which embody the idea behind the gnome. For example, the shortest formulation of the idea that suffering brings learning is Aeschylus' famous dictum πάθει μάθος at *Ag.* 177. These two words form the nucleus around which every rendition of this thought is built.[12] However, just like Homeric formulae, this nucleus can be "telescoped" or "reshaped."[13] An expanded

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[9] Lardinois, "Wisdom in Context," Appendix A. For earlier collections of these gnomai, see Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung*, and Bischoff, *Gnomen Pindars*.

[10] Other examples include Homer *Il.* 9.309, 11.409 (χρεώ), 19.228, Phocylides frs. 5, 14 and 15 Diehl, Theognis 179, 303, Xenophanes fr. 1.13, Pindar *P.* 2.34, 3.59–60, Epicharmus fr. 263 K (quoted as a gnome by Aristotle *Rhet.* 1394b13).

[11] Other examples include *Il.* 11.469 and Theognis 931. There is a whole series of adjectives + infinitives or nouns based on verbal roots, expressing whether something is good, bad, difficult, or desirable. Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung*, 47, lists most of them: (οὐκ) ἀγαθόν, αἰσχρόν, ἄμεινον, ἀργαλέον, βέλτερον, ἐσθλόν, (οὐ) κακόν, (οὐ) καλόν, οἴκτιστον, χαλεπόν.

[12] See H. Dörrie, *Leid und Erfahrung: Die Wort- und Sinn-Verbindung παθεῖν—μαθεῖν im griechischen Denken* (Wiesbaden, 1956) for examples.

[13] I have borrowed these terms from Richard Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the* Iliad (Ithaca, 1989), 215. Technically speaking these "themes" can be called formulae as well, if one defines a formula as "a pair or group of

version of the thought that suffering brings learning is found some seventy lines later in *Ag.* 250: Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει ("Justice so weighs the scales that learning comes to those who have suffered"). On the other hand, a thought can be "reshaped" by replacing one of the nuclear terms with an equivalent term; one may compare Pindar *Isthmian* 1.40b: ὁ πονήσαις δὲ νόῳ καὶ προμάθειαν φέρει ("One who has toiled also gains foresight for his mind") with the scholion that paraphrases the line as: ὁ παθὼν καὶ τῷ νῷ προμηθὴς γίγνεται ("One who has suffered also becomes thoughtful in his mind").[14] At *Il.* 17.32 and 20.198 both terms are replaced, although in this case the root παθ- still makes its presence felt: the infinitive παθέειν is deployed in the preceding sentence, referring to the same action as ῥεχθὲν in the gnome. Both Menelaos and Achilleus counsel their Trojan opponents to retreat before they suffer (παθέειν) any harm. The full text reads

> . . . ἀλλά σ' ἔγωγ' ἀναχωρήσαντα κελεύω
> ἐς πληθὺν ἰέναι, μηδ' ἀντίος ἵστασ' ἐμεῖο
> πρίν τι κακὸν παθέειν· ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω.[15]
>
> . . . But I order you to retreat and to stand
> back in the throng and not to oppose me before you
> suffer any harm. A fool gains understanding after the deed.

At Hesiod's *WD* 218, the same expression occurs with the verb παθεῖν in place: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω ("A fool gains understanding after suffering"). I am not arguing that πάθει μάθος or sayings that contain both these terms are somehow older or more authentic than Hesiodic or Iliadic examples which reshape one or more of the thematic terms. The nuclear theme is only an "ideal type," which always manifests itself in different shapes and forms.

Another example of a gnomic theme is the thought that "men are a city's best defenses." Gnomai expressing this idea appear to be built around a word for "men," a word for "city," and some term for "wall" or "defense work." The theme is fully displayed both

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words connected by mutual expectancy" (Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 64, following J. B. Hainsworth, *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula* [Oxford, 1968]). I prefer to use the word "theme" for the semantic content of gnomai in order to make a distinction with the structural patterns that determine the shape of the gnome, such as χρή + infinitive, for which I reserve the term "formula."

[14] A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina* (Leipzig, 1927), 3:206.

[15] *Il.* 17.28–30 = 20.196–98.

at Alcaeus Fr. 112.10 and at Plutarch's *Lycurgus* 19.12. Alcaeus says that "warrior men are a city's tower" (ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλιος πύργος ἀρεύι[οι]),[16] and Plutarch that "not without walls will be a city that is protected by manly ones instead of stone ones" (οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἀτείχιστος πόλις, ἥτις ἀνδρείοις καὶ οὐ πλινθίνοις ἐστεφάνωται).[17] In other attestations of this thought, one of the nuclear terms is either left out altogether,[18] or replaced by a synonym,[19] or a circumlocution.[20] In fifth-century Athens, significantly, ships were added to the equation. Thus, Sophocles can say that "neither wall nor ship is anything, devoid of men who live in it" (... οὐδέν ἐστιν οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναῦς / ἐρῆμος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω), and Thucydides that "men make a city, not walls or ships empty of men" (ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τείχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κεναί).[21] These last two examples show that even the underlying themes of gnomai are subject to modification.

Oral Features of Gnomic Expressions in the Homeric Epics

In order to show how exactly Greek gnomai are composed, I will take a detailed look at the first three gnomai in Homer's *Iliad*.[22] I will examine several structural features and lexical elements, such as distinctive particles, epic τε, the gnomic aorist, phonetic devices and rhythm, which occur in these gnomai. Some of them correspond to discourse features found in other, non-Greek proverbial expressions,

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[16] Alcaeus Fr. 112.10 Voigt. Alternatively, Alcaeus may have said that "men are a city's warrior tower" (ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλιος πύργος ἀρεύι[ον]); see E.-M. Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus. Fragmenta* (Amsterdam, 1971), ad loc.

[17] Plutarch *Lyc.* 19.12, cf. *Apo. Lac.* 228E.

[18] For example, Aeschylus *Pers.* 349: ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἕρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλεώς (but note the word πόλις in the previous line.)

[19] Dio Cassius 56.6: ἄνθρωποι γάρ που πόλις ἐστὶν, οὐκ οἰκίαι. Here the original thought is changed from "men are a city's defenses" to "humans are a city's structures in general." Another example is Gorgias *Hel.* 1: κόσμος πόλει μὲν εὐανδρία.

[20] τὸ χαλκᾶ καὶ σιδῆρα δεῖν εἶναι τὰ τείχη μᾶλλον ἢ γήινα—Anonymous poet, cited by Plato *Leg.* 778d7.

[21] Sophocles *OT* 56–57, Thucydides 7.77.7; compare Herodotus 8.61 where Themistocles says that Athens will be a city as long as it has two hundred ships filled with men (cf. Plutarch *Them.* 11.1). The Spartans, by contrast, are associated with the land version: Plato *Leg.* 778d7 is applied to Sparta, as is Lycurgus' version (Plutarch *Lyc.* 19.12, *Apo. Lac.* 228E). Compare also Plutarch *Apo. Lac.* 210E (attributed to Agesilaos) and 217E (attributed to Antalcidas).

[22] Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung*, 12–13; Lardinois "Wisdom in Context," 49–52, 278.

while others are peculiar to Greek gnomai. They constitute a distinct language that helps the speaker to create a gnomic saying extemporaneously and the listener to identify the expression as gnomic.

The first gnome in Homer's *Iliad* is found at 1.63: καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν ("for even a dream comes from Zeus"). It is spoken by Achilleus when he decides to consult a seer or dream-interpreter about the pestilence that is sweeping the Greek camp. This gnome is introduced by καί, which indicates its close connection to the surrounding context, in particular to Achilleus' demand, in the preceding half-line, for a dream-interpreter (ὀνειροπόλος).[23] This particle is followed by γάρ, a conjunction often paired with καί, which characterizes the expression as an argument.[24] Most gnomai function as arguments and are introduced by conjunctions which reveal this state of affairs.[25]

Next, there is the peculiar use of epic τε which, according to Ruijgh, emphasizes the generalizing force of the expression as well as its connection to the preceding context.[26] By themselves these particles can be found in all kinds of statements, but taken together they are a strong indication that we are dealing with a gnomic expression.[27] The syntax of this particular saying is not extraordinary, the sequence subject-complement-verb (in this case predicate-copula) being a common word order in Greek sentences.[28] The saying does seem to contain, however, a traditional gnomic formula (noun + ἐκ Διός ἐστιν).[29] The succinctness of the expression is another possible indication that it is, indeed, proverbial.[30]

The second gnome in the *Iliad*, 1.80–83, is by contrast an extended

[23] καί, according to C. J. Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique"* (Amsterdam, 1971), 724, emphasizes not the whole sentence but only the word ὄναρ, which is the word that picks up on ὀνειροπόλος in the preceding sentence. Compare the use of καί in for example *Il.* 2.291, 7.282, 9.502, *Od.* 3.196, 4.197, 14.85.

[24] For the pairing of καί and γάρ in arguments, see J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*, 2d rev. ed. (Oxford, 1954), 108–9.

[25] Lardinois, "Modern Paroemiology," 219.

[26] Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique"*, 2–3.

[27] The combination γάρ τε is regularly found in gnomai (Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique"*, 721): e.g. *Il.* 9. 406, 13.279, 24.527, *Od.* 3.147, 4.397, 5.79, 7.294, Hesiod *WD* 30, 214, 547, 761, Phocylides Fr. 7.2 Diehl, Theognis 281. The combination καὶ γάρ τε is also used to introduce a string of gnomai at *Il.* 9.502.

[28] K. J. Dover, *Greek Word Order* (Cambridge, 1960), 25.

[29] Compare the gnomic phrases in *Il.* 2.197: τιμὴ δ' ἐκ Διός ἐστι, Hesiod *WD* 765: Ἤματα δ' ἐκ Διόθεν, and *Th.* 96: ἐκ δὲ Διὸς βασιλῆες. A reshaped version of this formula is found at *Il.* 9.502, 19.91 and Hesiod *WD* 256.

[30] Russo, "Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," 122.

saying. This gnome is distinguished at the beginning by its syntax and its marked order of predicate-conjunction-subject: κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ·/ εἴ περ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ, / ἀλλά τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσσῃ, / ἐν στήθεσσιν ἑοῖσι.[31] The absence of the copula secures the first line as a nominal phrase, which is another typical feature of Greek gnomai.[32] What is most remarkable about this saying is the way it is expanded over three full lines. A number of other gnomai share this feature, including *Il.* 1.278–79, 2.24–25, 2.196–97 etc. A gnome may be expanded by the addition of a single word,[33] or a half-sentence,[34] or it may be conjoined to a whole new gnomic expression.[35] In general one can say that an expansion gives a gnome greater weight in accordance with the Homeric principle that "bigger is better."[36]

The third gnome in the *Iliad* is neither as short as the first one (1.63b) or as long as the second (1.80–83), but of average length: one hexameter line.[37] It is spoken by Achilleus at 1.218 in answer

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[31] "For very powerful [is] a king when he is angry with a lesser man, and even if that same day he swallows his anger, till it is vented he holds a grievance in his breast." For the construction predicate + conjunction + subject—copula, compare e.g. *Il.* 1.589, 9.406, 407, 9.497, *Od.* 2.244–45, 4.103, 4.837.

[32] E. Benveniste, "La phrase nominale" (1950), reprinted in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1966), 151–67, 162; C. Guiraud, *La phrase nominale en grec d' Homère à Euripide* (Paris, 1962), 33–34. About one third of Homeric gnomai are nominal phrases. Most others make use of what is sometimes referred to as "gnomic tenses": present, aorist and occasionally perfect; see W. W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar*, rev. ed. (London, 1894), 276.

[33] For example, *Il.* 6.493a: πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει /πᾶσι. This same gnome is found at *Il.* 20.137 but without the expansion. Cf. *Od.* 1.359a, 11.353a, 21.353a.

[34] Relative clauses: e.g. *Il.* 1.278–79: ἐπεὶ οὔ ποθ' ὁμοίης ἔμμορε τιμῆς / σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, ᾧ τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν; cf. *Il.* 2.25, 2.293b–93, 3.66; added sentences: e.g. *Il.* 2.196–97: θυμὸς δὲ μέγας ἐστὶ διοτρεφέων βασιλήων, / τιμὴ δ' ἐκ Διός ἐστι, φιλεῖ δέ ἑ μητίετα Ζεύς; cf. *Il.* 1.81–83, 5.408–09, 6.147–49.

[35] For example, *Il.* 5.532, 9.319 and 320. For a similar phenomenon in New Mexican Spanish and sixteenth century English proverbs, see C. I. Briggs, *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art* (Philadelphia, 1988), 119; R. D. Abrahams and B. A. Babcock, "The Literary Use of Proverbs," *Journal of American Folklore* 90 (1970): 414–29, 422–23.

[36] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 224. Norman Austin, "The Function of Digressions in the *Iliad*," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 7 (1966): 295–312, 306, writes with regard to another type of wisdom expression in Homer, the paradigmatic tale, that "[t]he length of the anecdote . . . is as relevant as its content. The expansion of the anecdote is a form of *amplificatio*, or what Greek rhetoricians later called αὔξησις, a heightening of the subject, and so itself a form of persuasion . . . . In paradigmatic digressions the length of the anecdote is in direct proportion to the necessity of persuasion at the moment." The same in my opinion holds true for gnomic expressions.

[37] Cf. *Il.* 4.235, 4.320, 5.531 and 532, 6.261, 9.309, *Od.* 3.24, 3.147, 3.231, 4.353.

to the goddess Athena: ὅς κε θεοῖς ἐπιπείθηται, μάλα τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοῦ ("Whoever obeys the gods, they listen best to him"). The expression opens with a relative pronoun introducing a relative clause, a marked deviation from ordinary Greek sentence construction, in which the relative clause tends to follow its antecedent.[38] The subjunctive with κε in the relative clause helps to emphasize the general condition of the saying,[39] while the main clause contains a gnomic aorist and another example of epic τε (τ' ἔκλυον).[40]

A number of these lexical and structural features, which mark the style of these expressions as gnomic, appear to be remnants of older, Proto Indo-European or Pre-Homeric Greek constructions. Epic τε, as used in generalized statements or similes, was, according to Ruijgh, by the eighth century already becoming obsolete.[41] Both the nominal phrase and the preposed relative clause were, according to Meillet and Benveniste, common Proto Indo-European constructions,[42] while

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[38] Goodwin, *Greek Grammar,* 218; P. Monteil, *La phrase relative en grec ancien: sa formation, son développement, sa structure des origines à la fin du 5ème siècle A.C.* (Paris, 1963), 38 and 66 (with special reference to the ὅς-clause in Homer). Monteil remarks that preposed relative clauses with the relative pronoun ὅς in Homer, "s'accommodent particulièrement d'une subordonnée définissante, qui détermine une catégorie comme possèdant une habitude" (55). Other examples of preposed relative clauses in Homeric gnomai are: *Il.* 3.109–10, 9.341–42, 9.508–9, 9.510–12, 11.409–10, 23.322f., 24.529f., *Od.* 19.329–31, 19.332–34.

[39] P. Chantraine, *Grammaire homérique*, vol. 2, *Syntaxe* (Paris, 1953), 245. Chantraine, however, wished to replace κε here by τε (247), but his suggestion was refuted by Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique"*, 87. For subjunctive + κε / ἄν in the relative clause of a gnomic sentence, compare *Il.* 7.410, 9.312, 9.510, 11.409, 15.209, 19.167, 20.243, 20.250 and 23.322.

[40] W. Leaf, *The* Iliad, vol. 1, 2d ed. (London, 1900), 20, and G. S. Kirk, *The* Iliad: *A Commentary,* vol. 1: books 1–4 (Cambridge, 1985), 75, speak in this case of "gnomic τε," but there is no need to distinguish this use of epic τε from its other occurrences.

[41] Ruijgh, *Autour de "te épique"*, 112. Here we are faced with the problem that Homeric gnomai are preserved in a type of speech which is itself marked by archaisms. It is possible that the use of epic τε in Homeric gnomai reflects their use in epic Greek in general rather than a special feature of gnomic language. This particular use of epic τε is, however, also attested in later, non-epic poetry, e.g. Phocylides fr. 7.2, Theognis 138, 148, 281, 359 and Pindar *P.* 11.29.

[42] On the widespread use of the nominal phrase in Proto Indo-European, see A. Meillet, "La phrase nominale en indo-européen," *Mémoires de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 14 (1906/08): 1–26; Benveniste, "La phrase nominale"; and C. Guiraud, *La phrase nominale en grec*, esp. 12–21. On the preposed relative clause: E. Benveniste, "La phrase relative, problème de syntaxe générale" (1957), reprinted in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1966), 208–22, 214; Monteil, *La phrase relative*, 4–5; and H. Kurzová, *Der Relativsatz in den indoeuropäischen Sprachen* (Hamburg, 1981), 18–19.

the gnomic aorist has close parallels in Vedic and may preserve the original, timeless aspect of this mood.[43] However, the antiquity of these constructions is no proof that the sayings themselves are ancient as well. It is possible that speakers of gnomic language, just like those of epic verse, preserved certain archaic features in order to create expressions that sounded venerable and old.[44] Clear examples of newly created sayings that exhibit similar features are the general statements found among the fragments of Heraclitus.[45] These prose sayings further demonstrate that this gnomic language is not restricted to the poetic representation of gnomic statements, but extends to their use in ordinary speech.

In an important article on the poetics of the ancient Greek proverb, Joseph Russo has looked at some of the phonetic devices that mark Greek proverbial expressions. Most of his examples come from late Hellenistic and Roman collections of Greek sayings, but the same phonetic devices already occur in Homeric gnomai. Russo concludes that "[a] large number of Greek proverbs have no striking features whatsoever. They make their point in plain language, through sheer economy and sharpness of insight." Of any acoustic devices, he says, "[t]he preferences seem to be for alliteration and word repetition most of all; then for a medium amount (compared to English) of assonance and vowel harmony (with very little rhyme); and not infrequently binary structures in roughly isometric units, to bring out parallelism and sometimes to emphasize oppositional meanings."[46]

An examination of the acoustic features of the gnomai in the *Iliad*

[43] J. Gonda, *The Character of the Indo-European Moods, with special regard to Greek and Sanskrit* (Wiesbaden, 1956); E. Schwyzer and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Gramatik*, vol. 2, *Syntax und syntaktische Stilistik* (Munich, 1950), 285. Egbert Bakker, in this volume, has argued, quite convincingly, that the gnomic aorist in fact represents a present tense. Even so, this use of the aorist, while perhaps not of Indo-European origin, would still be a distinctive feature of gnomic and other, related expressions.

[44] One may compare the use of archaizing features in African sayings: R. Finnegan, "Proverbs in Africa" (1970), reprinted in *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb*, ed. W. Mieder and A. Dundes (New York, 1981), 10–42, 22. What Roger Abrahams says about modern proverbs may apply to Greek gnomai as well: "Proverbs work . . . because they *seem* to embody the wisdom of the past" ("Proverbs and Proverbial Expressions," in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction*, ed. R. M. Dorson [Chicago, 1972], 117–27, 122; his italics).

[45] For example, preposed relative clause: fr. 55 D.-K./5 M.: ὅσων ὄψις ἀκοὴ μάθησις, ταῦτα ἐγὼ προτιμέω; nominal sentence: fr. 54 D.-K./9 M.: ἁρμονίη ἀφανὴς φανερῆς κρείττων; gnomic aorist: fr. 79 D.-K./92 M.: ἀνὴρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος ὅκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός.

[46] Russo, "Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," 125.

largely confirms Russo's findings. About two-fifths of all gnomai in the *Iliad* exhibit no particular phonetic structure whatsoever. Among the other ones, however, no significant difference between the number of alliterations and assonance is found; in fact, there are slightly more instances of assonance, and a fair number of gnomai display both alliteration and assonance, for example 1.63: καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν.[47] Few examples of word repetition within the text of a single gnome occur, but words are repeated from the immediate context of gnomai,[48] and there is some evidence of word play.[49] Binary or isometric structures abound, especially if one adds the expanded gnomai that express the same thought twice, for example 5.531–32: αἰδομένων ἀνδρῶν πλέονες σόοι ἠὲ πέφανται· / φευγόντων δ' οὔτ' ἂρ κλέος ὄρνυται οὔτε τις ἀλκή.[50] Russo argues that these acoustic elements are in general intended as mnemonic devices, which help the speaker to remember the exact wording of the expressions, but since Homeric gnomai were not repeated verbatim, it is more likely that they served to make the text of these gnomai stand out from their context. Expressions displaying such acoustic elements are, as Russo says, "the equivalent of complete little poems."[51] A certain belief in word-magic may also be at work in the suggestion that phonemic parallels correspond to connections in reality.[52]

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[47] Alliteration: *Il.* 1.80, 5.531 (= 15.563), 9.63, 9.158, 11.390, 11.514, 12.270–71, 15.207, 15.208, 17.99, 19.167–70, 22.75, 24.49; assonance or vowel harmony: *Il.* 1.274, 2.291, 5.383–84, 11.408, 15.202 (= 16.52), 20.131, 24.525–26; with rhyme: *Il.* 1.278–79, 2.196, 2.297–98, 3.108, 5.441–42, 9.406 and 407, 19.497, 12.412, 17.447, 18.328, 20.242, 22.72, 24.524; alliteration and assonance: *Il.* 1.63, 5.407, 9.249–50, 9.309, 9.632–33, 18.128–29, 19.90, 19.91, 19.162, 19.221, 19.227, 19.228–29, 20.248–49, 22.490, 24.463–64.

[48] For example, *Il.* 7.282: νὺξ δ' ἤδη τελέθει· ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι. This phenomenon was already noted by G. Nagy, review of *Die Wiederhohlungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias*, by D. Fehling, *American Journal of Philology* 92 (1971): 730–33, 731, who cites as examples *Il.* 7.282, 13.72, 24.354 and Hesiod *WD* 352.

[49] For example, *Il.* 2.292 (ἕνα μῆνα μένων), 5.383–84 (χαλέπ' ἄλγε' ἐπ' ἀλ . . .), 6.261 (μένος μέγα οἶνος), 9.309 (ἀπηλεγέως ἀποειπεῖν), 14.81 (φεύγων προφύγῃ), 19.91 (θυγάτηρ Ἄτη, ἣ πάντας ἀᾶται), 20.250 (εἴπῃσθα ἔπος), 22.75 (αἰδῶ τ' αἰσχύνωσι).

[50] Binary structures: *Il.* 1.218, 2.204, 5.442, 5.874, 6.146, 9.313, 9.508, 9.318, 319, 320, 11.409–10, 13.730–34, 14.81, 15.741, 16.630, 19.79–80, 19.81–82, 20.250, 24.527–28.

[51] Russo, "Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," 123.

[52] Russo, "Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," 124. For other examples of word magic in Homer, see N. Austin, "Name Magic in the *Odyssey*," *California Studies in Classical Antiquity* 5 (1972): 1–19, and R. Renehan, "The Staunching of Odysseus' Blood: The Healing Power of Magic," *American Journal of Philology* 113 (1992): 1–4.

Some commentators, including Gregory Nagy, Ezio Pellizer, and J. A. Fernandez Delgado, have further suggested that a traditional meter, the so-called paroemiac, was associated with gnomic expressions.[53] The paroemiac, named after one of the ancient Greek terms for proverbial expressions (παροιμία), can be analyzed as a catalectic dimeter or procephalic dactylic trimeter and corresponds to the slot between the penthemimeres (or "masculine") caesura and the end of the hexameter line. An example is the first gnome in the *Iliad*, which I quoted above: καὶ γάρ τ' ὄναρ ἐκ Διός ἐστιν (1.63). Nagy, Pellizer and Delgado, however, also include examples of sayings that start after the trochaic or "feminine" caesura in the third foot. This metrical variant already suggests that these so-called "paroemiac sayings" were adapted to fit the hexameter line, unless one wants to assume, with Delgado, that the meter had developed a "feminine" variant independently of the intricacies of the hexameter line. This scenario is highly unlikely. Greek gnomai were composed in a variety of meters, including iambics, elegiacs and melic verse. In ordinary, non-poetic conversation they were probably composed in stylized prose, like the sayings of the Seven Sages, the fragments of Heraclitus, or the Greek proverbs studied by Russo.[54] The term "paroemiac" may have been invented by some Hellenistic scholar who noted the regular occurrence of such self contained gnomic phrases after the penthemimeres caesura in epic.[55] The judgment of the second-century

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[53] Nagy, review of *Die Wiederhohlungsfiguren*, 731; E. Pellizer, "Metremi proverbiali nelle 'Opere e i giorni' di Esiodo: Osservazioni sulla tecnica compositiva della poesia esametrica 'sapienziale,'" *Quaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica* 13 (1972): 24–37; J. A. F. Delgado, "La poesia sapiencial de greca arcaica y los origenes del hexametro," *Emerita* 50 (1982): 151–73.

[54] Proverbial expressions of Egypt and the Near East are also written in structured prose, which the Egyptologist Miriam Lichtheim has dubbed "orational" (quoted by K. Robb, "Preliterate Ages and the Linguistic Art of Heraclitus," in *Language and Thought in Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. K. Robb [La Salle, Ill., 1983], 153–206, 153). The same applies to Indo-European wisdom sayings, if the early Irish material is representative (for some examples, see R. P. Martin, "Hesiod, Odysseus and the Instruction of Princes," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 114 (1984): 29–48). Here are some examples of "orational style" in the prose sayings of the Seven sages, which are preserved in Stobaeus 3.1.172, who cites from a collection prepared by Demetrius of Phaleron (I cite from the text in Diels-Kranz, vol. 1, 63–66): e.g. alliteration: κολακεύειν γονεῖς μὴ ὄκνει—Thales nr.6, assonance: ἀνιαρὸν ἀργία—Thales nr. 11; chiasm (+ rhyme): τοῖς μὲν νόμοις παλαιοῖς χρῶ, τοῖς δὲ ὄψοις προσφάτοις—Periander nr.16; word-sound play: οἰκέτας παρ' οἶνον μὴ κολάζειν, εἰ δὲ μὴ, δόξεις παροινεῖν—Cleoboulus nr.17; parallelism: εὐποροῦντα μὴ ὑπερήφανον εἶναι, ἀποροῦντα μὴ ταπεινοῦσθαι—Cleoboulus nr. 20.

[55] Compare M. L. West, *Hesiod* Works and Days (Oxford, 1978), 211: "Gnomic

C.E. metrist Hephaestion seems to me to be entirely correct: "A catalectic dimeter is called a paroemiac because some proverbial expressions (παροιμίαι) are found in this meter . . . but there are proverbial expressions in epic and iambic verse as well, and not only in this meter. Therefore, it is not proper to call this meter alone a paroemiac."[56]

Evidence for the oral composition of gnomai in performance also comes from the way the Homeric heroes are represented in the epics as speaking. Diomedes, for example, is a young hero in the *Iliad*, who, according to Martin, learns how to speak effectively throughout the course of the epic. In Book 10 he is still fairly inept, as is shown, among other things, by what Martin calls "his clumsy gnomic utterance" at lines 224–26:[57]

> σύν τε δύ' ἐρχομένω καί τε πρὸ ὃ τοῦ ἐνόησεν
> ὅππως κέρδος ἔῃ· μοῦνος δ' εἴ πέρ τε νοήσῃ
> ἀλλά τέ οἱ βράσσων τε νόος, λεπτὴ δέ τε μῆτις.

> When two go together, at least one in turn is mindful
> of what is best, but a man alone, even if he is mindful,
> still has less mind and his wit is slender.

This is not the most coherent statement ever made. One of the problems with the statement is that the expansion of the first saying by a second one at lines 225b–26, while adhering to a common pattern, does not make the thought any clearer. Another problem is the excess of epic τε: one normally finds one or two such particles in any one saying, but Diomedes produces no fewer than six of them in just three lines. I believe that Diomedes is presented as overdoing it, because he still has to learn how to make a proper gnomic

tags often occupy the second half of the hexameter (hence the name 'paroemiac' for the colon)."

[56] Τὸ δὲ δίμετρον καταληκτικὸν καλεῖται μὲν παροιμιακὸν διὰ τὸ παροιμίας τινὰς ἐν τούτῳ τῷ μέτρῳ εἶναι . . . ἀλλὰ παροιμίαι εἰσὶ καὶ ἐπικαὶ καὶ ἰαμβικαὶ καὶ οὐ τούτου τοῦ μέτρου μόνου· ὥστ' οὐκ εἰκότως αὐτὸ μόνον παροιμιακὸν καλοῦσι.—Hephaestion 8.6 (Cons. pp. 26–27). This does not mean that the paroemiac slot in the hexameter line cannot represent an older meter. Given its close correspondence to other Indo-European meters, in particular the Slavic 10-syllable epic verse (see C. Watkins, "Indo-European metrics and Archaic Irish Verse" [1963], reprinted in *Selected Writings*, vol. 2 [Innsbruck, 1994], 349–404, 351), it probably does. I only question whether this meter has any specific connection with Indo–European proverbs or pre-Homeric gnomai.

[57] Martin, *Language of Heroes*, 125.

expression. It is highly ironic in this regard that in the second half of his statement he singles out a man who "alone, even if he is mindful, still has less mind and his wit (μῆτις) is slender." The last part of this line ("his wit is slender") recurs in Book 23 where Antilochos says the same thing about a young man's mind.[58] In Book 10 young Diomedes shows that his own wit is still slender, because wit or μῆτις is also the kind of intelligence required to make proper gnomai.[59]

The Originality of Greek Proverbial Expressions

I have argued that Greek gnomic expressions were created in performance with the help of traditional formulae and themes. Antilochos' saying in *Iliad* Book 23, about the weakness of a young man's mind (quoted in footnote 58) is paralleled by two gnomai that I cited at the beginning of this article (*Il.* 3.108 and *Od.* 7.294). All three gnomai are novel renditions of the same "traditional" theme and are based on a word for young man, a word for mind, and a pejorative term describing this mind.

In order to understand how a saying can be both traditional and newly created at the same time, it is important to realize that traditionality in societies like ancient Greece, in which most verbal art was still produced orally, hardly ever means a precise and verbatim repetition of words from the past. In many so-called traditional societies the mere repetition of words is looked upon negatively.[60] On

[58] οἶσθ' οἷαι νέου ἀνδρὸς ὑπερβασίαι τελέθουσι·/κραιπνότερος μὲν γάρ τε νόος, λεπτὴ δέ τε μῆτις.—*Il.* 23.589–90.

[59] The wit (μῆτις) of the other person to whom Diomedes may be referring, πολύμητις Odysseus, is of course never in doubt.

[60] Exceptions are certain ritual prayers; see for example J. Scherzer, "*Namakke, Sumakke, Kormakke*: Three Types of Cuna Speech Event," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. R. Bauman and J. Scherzer (Cambridge, 1974), 263–82, who contrasts such prayers with the more creative, and more appreciated, art of speechmaking among the Cuna Indians of Panama. For a Greek example, I can refer to the beginning of *Olympian* 9, where Pindar favorably contrasts his newly created victory ode (which nevertheless follows a traditional scheme) with the fixed and standardized καλλινίκος-ode of Archilochus: see L. Kurke, "The Poet's Pentathlon: Genre in Pindar's First *Isthmian*," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 29 (1988): 97–116, 106; K. A. Morgan, "Pindar the Professional and the Rhetoric of the ΚΩΜΟΣ," *Classical Philology* 88 (1993): 1–15, 7–8.

Madagascar, for example, among the Vakinakaratra, a speaker who pretends to be inexperienced excuses himself by saying: "I am not an originator of words, but a borrower and a preserver of tradition".[61] This does not mean that as an originator of words he would only say novel things; on the contrary, an experienced speaker is supposed to command the *kabary* language, which is also the language of Malagasy proverbs and, unlike everyday speech, highly stylized.[62] The creation of Greek gnomai is very similar to that of Greek myth or epic formulae. To an existing stock of tales and phrases, themselves subject to change, are continually added new ones, and a composer working closely with traditional material can still claim to be original.[63]

The closest parallel I found for such a creative formation of wisdom expressions is the so-called "wise words" of the Western Apache. Keith Basso has shown how these "wise words" are continually generated, especially by the elder men and women of the villages, according to a strict syntactical scheme.[64] He also reports, however, that sometimes a particularly good expression is picked up and used by others in the village.[65] This borrowing suggests that some created sayings can become established. The close similarity between Hesiod *WD* 218 (παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω) and *Il.* 17.32 or 20.198 (ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω) seems to indicate that, in this instance, a particular version of the gnomic thought had become more or less "fixed," at least within hexameter poetry. Such "fixed" sayings would approximate what we refer to as proverbs. In most cases, however, we have to allow for a more flexible form, which couches a traditional thought

[61] E. Keenan, "Norm-Makers and Norm-Breakers: Uses of Speech by Men and Women in a Malagasy Community," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking*, ed. R. Bauman and J. Scherzer (Cambridge, 1974), 125–43, 135.

[62] Keenan, "Norm-Makers," 126, 128.

[63] A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 99ff. The ancient Greek attitude towards originality and traditionality is well known. One quotation may suffice: H. Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley, 1971), 44–45: "We now recognize that in the view of the ancients a poet's originality was not diminished by his use of old material, but rather displayed in his ingenious adaptation of that material to his own purposes."

[64] K. Basso, "'Wise Words' of the Western Apache: Metaphor and Semantic Theory," in *Meaning in Anthropology*, ed. K. Basso and H. Selby (Albuquerque, 1976), 93–121.

[65] Basso, "'Wise Words,'" 118.

in new words or expresses a novel idea in familiar phrasing. There is an English proverb which defines the genre as "the wisdom of many and the wit of one."[66] In the case of Greek gnomai both the wisdom and the wit belong to the many.[67]

[66] Quoted by A. Taylor, "The Wisdom of Many and the Wit of One" (1962), reprinted in *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb*, ed. W. Mieder and A. Dundes (New York, 1981), 3–9, 3.

[67] This article is based in part on my dissertation, "Wisdom in Context: The Use of Gnomic Statements in Archaic Greek Poetry" (Princeton University, 1995). I would like to thank my original advisors: Richard Martin, Andrew Ford and Froma Zeitlin, the anonymous referee, and the participants of the Epos and Logos conference for their valuable suggestions and comments, and Michelle Lewis, who helped to revise my English. All remaining mistakes are still mine.

CHAPTER SIX

POETIC AUTHORITY AND ORAL TRADITION IN HESIOD AND PINDAR

Ruth Scodel

Elsewhere, I have discussed the distinction Homer makes, especially in the *Odyssey*, between the songs of bards and other storytelling.[1] This argument rests especially on three recent insights that appear to point in quite opposite directions. First, Andrew Ford shows in *Homer: the Poetry of the Past* how the *Odyssey* evades the reality of the transmission of poetic tradition as well as that of bardic contests. The Muses simply replace poets' teachers; the narrative content of performance has no naturalistic source.[2] S. Douglas Olson has shown in *Blood and Iron* how richly the same epic depicts the workings of everyday oral tradition, its considerable interest in how news gets around.[3] Third, Louise Pratt argues convincingly that the truth-claims of early Greek poetry need to be interpreted relative to their rhetorical functions in context. While only fables are truly fiction, for most poetic narrative historical accuracy is not the primary concern.[4]

Homer, then, shows how people in reality create and spread *kleos*, but he seems to want to avoid facing the obvious implication that poetic performances depend on what earlier storytellers have transmitted. The proem to the Catalogue of Ships perfectly demonstrates this peculiarity in its distinction between the Muses, who see and hear everything, and poet and audience, who only hear the *kleos* and know nothing (*Il.* 2.484–93). So in asking why Homer does not acknowledge openly that his stories depend on tradition, I looked at what distinguishes bardic performances from other storytelling practices in Homer, and concluded that the most important distinctions

[1] R. Scodel, "Bardic Performance and Oral Tradition in Homer," *American Journal of Philology* 119 (1998): 171–94.

[2] A. Ford, *Homer: the Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, 1992) 90–130.

[3] S. D. Olson, *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in Homer's* Odyssey, Mnemosyne Supplement 148 (Leiden, 1995), 1–23.

[4] L. Pratt, *Lying and Poetry from Homer to Pindar* (Ann Arbor, 1993).

are the self-interest of the narrator and the social pressures of particular narrative contexts. The Homeric poems demonstrate an extraordinary awareness of how self-interested narrative practices can be. Both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* are full of embedded narratives. Most are clearly "true" for their tellers. Still, they are told for a purpose, and both external and internal audiences evaluate them within their context. The *Apologos* of Odysseus is clearly fictionally "true"—the narrator elsewhere alludes to its events in his own voice. At the same time, as Glen Most has shown, it is an extended paradigm of hospitality, intended to ensure Odysseus' return.[5]

Speakers of exempla often cite their sources for their stories, whether tradition or personal memory, to bolster their authority. Their most important authority, however, is the occasion itself. Although as argument the example supports the point a speaker makes on a specific occasion, the exemplum often makes transparent the Russian formalist understanding that, in narrative, the end determines the beginning, that the tellers' purposes are primary, the explicit cause-and-effect within the narrative secondary. The external audience of Achilleus' speech to Priam at *Il.* 24.602–17 is likely to realize that Niobe eats because Priam must eat. That does not make the story "untrue," though, even if the audience has never heard such a story before, because Priam truly ought to eat. Once the audience treats a narrative as socially embedded, the criteria for judging the narrative are explicitly social: the audience considers the relationship between teller and hearer, whether the teller seeks his own advantage or a common good. Odysseus' various lies are all purposeful narratives, and the external audience is not offended that they are false because the hearer sympathizes with Odysseus' purposes (the lie to Laertes being a possible exception). Bardic poetry, in contrast, although it is rich with meaning, does not address the immediate situation. The Muse (*Od.* 8.73), the poet (*Od.* 1.347), or a member of the audience (*Od.* 8.492–98) may select the subject of song, but the song itself is not constrained by the situation of its performance. Homer seems anxious not that the audience may question the referential truth of the narrative, but that they may suspect ulterior motives in it.

This awareness of the self-interested quality of narrative causes special problems for the authority of the Greek poet, since the overt

[5] G. Most, "The Structure and Function and Odysseus' *Apologoi*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 119 (1989): 15–30.

exemplum is simply the strongest case of a universal feature of narrative: somebody tells a story for a reason. The truth of a narrative can thus be evaluated on two different scales, one of historical accuracy, the other of application to the present. The second is more often critical, except in passages of poetry where the memory of heroes is at stake. Liars, in the world of Greek poetry, are storytellers who lack true narrative that would meet their particular ends, and so their lies are dangerous when the ends are bad. But because the audience of any story, or indeed any discourse, is likely to worry that the speaker is manipulating them, poets have to establish not just their competence, but their good faith. An Alcaeus among his friends has little trouble, because the loyalties of the community provide a context in which the audience can assume that his words aim at the good of the entire group. Alcaeus can begin a narrative about Helen ὡς λόγος (fr. 42 L–P), without implying either that he doubts it or that it must be true. Part of his task is to find material in the tradition that can provide meaning for a present occasion, and this task need not provoke any particular anxiety about either the reliability of the tradition or his own sincerity in applying it. Once the poet explicitly addresses a community other than his friends, however, he has the same problems any speaker might have.

There are radically different rhetorical approaches available to Greek poets for managing the problem of poetry as public discourse and establishing poetic authority. At one extreme, Homeric epic claims that song derives directly from the Muse, depending neither on the occasion nor on human report, for any secular transmission would introduce the possibility that particular needs and interests have affected the tale. Indeed, even the surviving proems for epic performances, the Homeric Hymns, do not usually acknowledge the location of performance, even though the proem would be an obvious opportunity to specify the connection between the song and its surroundings.[6] We assume that the hymns were originally intended for festivals of the gods they celebrate. Only the *Hymn to Apollo* marks its location as Delos and its performer as a blind Chian (146–76), and the poet addresses only other performers, the Delian maidens, although the audience clearly consists of the Ionians whose splendor

[6] M. Griffith, "Personality in Hesiod," *Classical Antiquity* 2 (1983): 46–47, guesses that the poet would have introduced performances with a self-identifying proem. In any case, the poems were transmitted without any attachments to an occasion.

the poet praises. The Muses make each performance completely independent. The daughters of Memory do not so much represent the oral tradition as mystify it; if the Homeric rhetoric is successful, it leads the audience away from considering whether a story is familiar or new. This strategy must have evolved in the context of composition-in-performance. The tradition as a whole is fluid and is larger than any individual's experience of it, so traditional referentiality is a rich but imprecise form of intertextuality. When poet and audience are accustomed to an aesthetic in which ephemeral variation is normal, the poet can try to convince the audience not to compare any individual performance to any other—except insofar as it may be more enjoyable.

Hesiod in the *Theogony* likewise denies any connection between the occasion of a performance and its contents. The poem does not specify its audience, and the poet never addresses the audience. Hesiod explicitly separates the contents of his performance from its occasion, saying that the Muses told him to sing theogonic poetry when he was initiated on Mt. Helikon (33). The here-and-now performance depends on *that* command *then*. The claim to be independent of occasion may well be disingenuous, for as West has argued, the *Theogony* we have looks as if it is a version specifically created for the funeral games of Amphidamas.[7] Three passages support this suggestion: the praise of kings (80–96); the praise of poetry as an alleviation of grief (98–103); and the catalogue of those whom Hekate can help (411–52), which seems particularly appropriate to a gathering on Euboia rather than inland Boiotia (it includes fishermen) and to an event with military associations. Hesiod, however, makes no overt allusion to the occasion.

Hesiod's Muses, however, and thus his authority, are somewhat different from Homer's. Hesiod's Muses, as we all know, admit to telling lies in the proem of the *Theogony*:

> "ποιμένες ἄγραυλοι, κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἶον,
> ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,
> ἴδμεν δ' εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι."
> ὣς ἔφασαν κοῦραι μεγάλου Διὸς ἀρτιέπειαι (26–29)

> "Shepherds of the fields, good-for-nothings, mere bellies, we know how to tell many lies that resemble truths, but we also know how to pro-

[7] M. L. West, *Hesiod* Theogony (Oxford, 1966), 44–45.

> claim truth, when we want to." So spoke the daughters of great Zeus, whose words come readily.[8]

The admission is a notorious problem: why should a didactic poet admit that the Muses ever tell lies, especially since they speak as goddesses—whether they tell the truth or lie is in their power, not his?[9] If the distinction were not significant, he has no reason to make it at all, unless we follow the argument that makes these lines a self-deconstruction, a deliberate evasion of meaning.[10] Is Hesiod acknowledging that his own poetry may be false?[11] But why should Hesiod be a post-modernist?

Could he be commenting on the existence of fictional poetry without criticizing it? This seems unlikely, since in that case he would have to be implying that the distinction is without value or moral weight, and he would have little reason to make it. Further, the Hesiodic poems do not commend lies. The *Theogony* places Ψεύδεα beside some unappealing siblings. Lies are children of Eris:

> αὐτὰρ Ἔρις στυγερὴ τέκε μὲν Πόνον ἀλγινόεντα
> Λήθην τε Λιμόν τε καὶ Ἄλγεα δακρυόεντα
> Ὑσμίνας τε Μάχας τε Φόνους τ' Ἀνδροκτασίας τε
> Νείκεά τε Ψεύδεά τε Λόγους τ' Ἀμφιλλογίας τε
> Δυσνομίην τ' Ἄτην τε, συνήθεας ἀλλήλῃσιν,
> Ὅρκόν θ', ὃς δὴ πλεῖστον ἐπιχθονίους ἀνθρώπους
> πημαίνει, ὅτε κέν τις ἑκὼν ἐπίορκον ὀμόσσῃ· (226–32)

> And hateful Strife gave birth to painful Labor, Forgetting, Famine, and tearful Griefs; Fights, Battles, Slayings, and Killings; Quarrels, Falsehoods, Speeches, Contradictions; Civic Disorder and Ruin, whose haunts are near each other's; and Oath, who most harms people on the earth, when someone swears a false oath.

They are among the gifts of Hermes to Pandora at *WD* 78: ψεύδεά θ' αἱμυλίους τε λόγους καὶ ἐπίκλοπον ἦθος, "falsehoods, wheedling speeches, and a sneaky character." The man born on the sixth

[8] Translations are my own, except for those from Pindar, where I use the Loeb of W. Race, *Pindar* (Cambridge, Mass., 1997) except as noted.

[9] W. Stroh, "Hesiods lügende Musen," in *Studien zum antiken Epos*, ed. H. Görgemanns and E. A. Schmidt (Meisenheim, 1976) has a full discussion of the range of interpretations.

[10] P. Pucci, *Hesiod and the Language of Poetry* (Baltimore, 1977), 9–14.

[11] Stroh, "Hesiods lügende Musen" (Hesiod emphasizes effect and plausibility); R. Lamberton, *Hesiod* (New Haven and London, 1988), 59.

φιλέοι δ' ὅ γε κέρτομα βάζειν
ψεύδεά θ' αἱμυλίους τε λόγους κρυφίους τ' ὀαρισμούς. (788–89)

Likes to speak jokes, and falsehoods, and crafty speeches, and secret intimacies.

Although this cannot be all bad, since the day is said to be good for the births of males (788), the passage as a whole places this day firmly within Hermes' realm. These passages together suggest a clear set of associations for lies in Hesiod: they belong in the realm of disputes, cheating, and erotic manipulation. Liars are people trying to get what they want. To be sure, Hesiod does not seem to object to fiction as such, since he tells an animal fable—the one genre clearly recognized as fully fictional from its earliest attestations—in the *Works and Days*. It would thus seem unlikely that a "true" fiction of this kind, an αἶνος, would count among Ψεύδεα.

Homer does not have to confront false poetry, because he denies both occasion and tradition as sources: each song comes directly from the Muses. Homeric rhetoric, by treating each performance as a unique moment of access to the Muses' knowledge, encourages its audience not to think about alternate versions. However, an obvious reason for someone to believe that the Muses inspired both truth and true-seeming poetry was the empirical fact that mutually contradictory stories circulated. The competitiveness of some performance situations would often provide an incentive for singers to emphasize their differences from others.[12] The *Theogony*, if it was Hesiod's prize-winning work, was created or modified for competition. In any case, Hesiod's poem is especially significant, and he clearly wants to convince the audience that his version is superior to all others, not just for the duration of the performance, but permanently. Hesiod—or his persona, at least—is not a traveling rhapsode with a varying repertory to please different patrons: he says that the Muses not only made him a poet, but directed him to a specific subject. So Hesiod confronts the existence of differing stories, whether from simple intellectual honesty, or because he is aware of criticism of poetry as false, or as polemic against other poets. Muses who speak both truth and believable lies at their own plea-

[12] See M. Griffith, "Context and Contradiction in Early Greek Poetry," in *The Cabinet of the Muses: Essays on Classical and Comparative Literature in Honor of Thomas G. Rosenmeyer*, ed. M. Griffith and D. Mastronarde (Atlanta, 1990), on the competitiveness of Greek poetry; on Hesiod's poems as "all-inclusive," 198.

sure thus appear to be hypostases of the tradition itself, instead of independent guarantors of the performance.[13] True stories and plausible lies are both in the repertory.

But if such a distinction between true and plausible, but false poetry, is to be helpful for the poet, there must be a criterion by which he can convince his audience, and perhaps himself, that his poetry is true: what would make true poetry distinguishable from poetry that sounds true? Since the Muses provide both, it can hardly be aesthetic merit—the Muses make speech beautiful and pleasing—or traditionality. The experience of the audience can hardly be used to evaluate the truth of a poem about the origins of the gods, either, and he makes no appeal to any external criteria. Pucci indeed argues that the Muses alone can tell the difference, and that Hesiod raises the problem only to evade it in the next line.[14] Yet the emphasis of the lines seems to be on the possibility of truth, which the Muses speak when they wish. Truth is placed second, as if their audience (Hesiod and his fellow-shepherds) already knows that poetry can be false.

Scholars have most often suggested that Hesiod is here contrasting his own, true poetry with Homer's, or more generally didactic with epic (whether or not they think the contrast is pejorative).[15] This interpretation is natural, since Hesiod is obviously "serious" in a way that Homeric epic is not. Such readings ally Hesiod with the Presocratics, making him the beginning of the long tradition of polemic against Homeric poetry. Furthermore, the legend of the Contest between Homer and Hesiod invites the interpreter to ground the story in a reality of such a competition. This interpetation is not entirely satisfying, though. First, the proem itself, only a few minutes

[13] K. von Fritz, "Das Hesiodische in Werken Hesiods," In *Hésiode et son Influence*, Entretiens Hardt 7 (Geneva, 1962), 14–16, assumes that the Muses represent the exact opposite—that what the Muses teach Hesiod must be other than what he received from his "sources."

[14] Pucci, *Hesiod*, 9–14.

[15] Homeric poetry as the "lies like truth": A. Kambylis, *Die Dichterwiehe und ihre Symbolik* (Heidelberg, 1965), 63; H. Maehler, *Die Auffassung des Dichterberufs im Frühen Griechentum bis zur Zeit Pindars* (Göttingen, 1963), 40–42; W. Verdenius, "Notes on the Proem of Hesiod's *Theogony*," *Mnemosyne* 25 (1972): 234; P. Murray, "Poetic Inspiration in Early Greece," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 101 (1981): 91; E. Bowie, "Lies, Fiction, and Slander in Early Greek Poetry," In *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World*, ed. C. Gill and T. P. Wiseman (Austin, 1993), 21–22; earlier bibliography in G. Lanata, *Poetica pre-platonica* (Florence, 1963), 24–25.

later in performance time, sets heroic songs, the κλεῖα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων, beside hymns to the gods as a means to alleviate grief (98–103). If Hesiod is criticizing heroic epic, therefore, his criticism is limited in its scope; falsehood does not make it any less valuable.

M. Finkelberg argues that the "poetics of truth" espoused by both Homer and Hesiod rest on a straightforward "catalogue" style: Homeric poetry, with its chronological complexity, extensive speeches, and extensive ornament, does not faithfully follow its own inherited poetics, while Hesiodic poetry does.[16] Yet while the *Theogony* is a much simpler narrative than the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, such genealogies as those of the children of Night and of Eris (211–32) may well have original elements that the poet nonetheless would want to see as true. It may not always be in Hesiod's interest to identify the "true" with material the poet repeats as he inherited it. The *Works and Days*, with its shifting attitude to Perses, would have to represent a dramatic change in rhetorical posture for a tradition whose claim to truth rested on the simplicity of catalogue style.

Again, the philosophic tradition criticizes Homer, but when the issue is the portrayal of the gods, Hesiod is even more culpable, since his gods commit such horrific acts against each other. Xenophanes (B 1 D–K) forbids

> οὔ τι μάχας διέπειν Τιτήνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων
> οὐδὲ ⟨ ⟩ Κενταύρων, πλάσμα⟨τα⟩ τῶν προτέρων,
> ἢ στάσιας σφεδανάς· τοῖς οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστιν·
> θεῶν ⟨δὲ⟩ προμηθείην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν. (21–24)

> Not going through battles of Titans or of Giants, nor of Centaurs, inventions of earlier people, nor violent feuds. There is nothing useful in these. And one should always have good consideration of the gods.

Xenophanes equates Homer and Hesiod as slanderers of the gods (B 11 D–K). Heraclitus objects to Homer and Archilochus (42), and uses Homer as wisest of Greeks to prove how deceived people are about reality (56); Hesiod he groups with Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Hecataeus as evidence that polymathy does not provide good sense (40), and he complains that Hesiod did not understand day and night (57). There is, in other words, no tradition of using Hesiod against Homer, but a tradition of polemic against both.

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[16] M. Finkelberg, *The Birth of Literary Fiction in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1998), 156–60.

Nagy's argument that "true" poetry is Panhellenic while false poetry is local similarly does not confront how an audience could derive such a claim from what Hesiod says or how they could use the criterion in practice. How could anyone in Hesiod's world really know what a "Panhellenic" version was, and why should anyone prefer a "Panhellenic" version to the local one?[17] Most performances surely combined local elements with Panhellenic ones; so Hesiod firmly places his Muses on Mt. Helikon first, naming the local springs Permessos, Hippokrene, and Olmeios, and then places their song on Olympos (36–52) and describes their birth on Pieria (53–62). The Olympian-Pierian Muses surely came to Hesiod through poetry, while he claims a direct connection with those of Helikon.[18] The Muses of Helikon thereafter become a familiar fixture of Greek poetry, but only because the *Theogony* achieved canonical status. Hesiod's Hekate (404–52) belongs to no other poetry. Hesiod, therefore, can hardly be basing a claim to truth entirely on the Panhellenic nature of his poetry. His poetry is far more locally rooted than Homeric epic.

Svenbro suggests that false poetry provides aristocrats with genealogies that link them to the gods, while Hesiod can claim that his poetry is true because it gives the genealogies only of gods, not those of mortals.[19] Yet the genealogies of gods could also have political implications and be areas of contestation, and the *Theogony* as extant ends with the unions of mortals and goddesses, leading directly to the *Ehoeae*. Clearly, poets in Hesiod's tradition felt no sharp distinction between divine and mortal genealogy.

Five lines of analysis may provide a plausible answer. First, Hesiod's digression on the favor the Muses show kings can help clarify how he imagines the Muses' function. Second, the familiar verbal parallel in the *Odyssey* may be helpful. Third, the poet's description of Nereus points towards Hesiod's view of "truth," especially when his other references to "lies" are placed in contrast. Other passages where Greek authors complain about poetic lies show what we might expect

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[17] G. Nagy, *Pindar's Homer: The Lyric Possession of an Epic Past* (Baltimore, 1990), 52–81, espcially 68–69.

[18] K. von Fritz, "Das Proömium der hesiodischen *Theogonie*," in *Hesiod*, ed. E. Heitsch, Wege der Forschung 44 (Darmstadt, 1966), 298–99, and Kambylis, *Dichterwiehe*, 35–38, argue that there was no cult of the Muses on Helikon before Hesiod—but then where did he dedicate the tripod of *WD* 559–60?

[19] J. Svenbro, *La parola e il marmo* (Turin, 1984), 66–75.

Hesiod to be talking about. Finally, it may be revealing that the Muses initially address Hesiod as a "mere belly."

Hesiod's Muses provide kings with an eloquence that enables them to settle quarrels, easily and without rancor (80–93). Similarly, he claims that poetic performance can distract even the person suffering from recent grief (98–103). The Muses, then, are not primarily providers of (maybe) accurate information about the past. Their songs are at a distance from everyday life and serve as a valuable distraction from it, while their ability to make language pleasurable and convincing provides a social benefit. When they help kings, they create social cohesion. The king's speech represents language at its most socially useful, as the self-interested lie represents it at its worst. I would suggest, though, that we can distinguish the king's own merit from the Muses' gifts. The king must himself seek to resolve disputes justly and harmoniously; the Muses provide the eloquence that enables him to succeed.

The Muse's language resembles Homer's phrase for the lie Odysseus tells Penelope at *Od.* 19.165–202: ἴσκε ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγων ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα, "He likened many lies to true things as he spoke, so that they were similar."[20] We do not need to postulate direct adaptation in either direction—a risky speculation in such an oral tradition—to use the connotations of one passage to decipher the other, since we can expect both uses of the phrase to follow principles of traditional referentiality. Odysseus' speech offers a description of Crete (172–80), then a genealogy: Odysseus claims to be a brother of Idomeneus named Aithon, and describes how he entertained Odysseus when the hero was forced into harbor on Crete on his way to Troy, since Idomeneus had already left. In making Odysseus a Cretan, this story resembles his other lies, but in other ways it differs slightly. Odysseus gives himself a name, and while it may be a significant one, it is not obviously so.[21] Some of the adventures in the *Apologos* begin with geographic/ethnographic summaries, but the other lies do not. Although there is no way of knowing whether any earlier poet had given Idomeneus a brother named Aithon or had caused Odysseus

[20] The line is very difficult, probably because the poet here has adapted traditional language (so that the very difficulty of the syntax confirms the phrase's traditional referentiality). See J. Russo on 19.203 (p. 87) in A. Heubeck et al., *A Commentary on Homer's* Odyssey (Oxford, 1988–1992).

[21] R. B. Rutherford, *Homer:* Odyssey *Books XIX and XX* (Cambridge, 1992), ad loc.

to be forced in at Amnisos on his way to Troy, this story could easily be true. In response to Penelope's question, Odysseus proceeds to describe the clothes he actually wore (22–35). Elsewhere, in contrast, Odysseus claims to have heard of Odysseus in Thesprotia, a place he does not visit in this *Odyssey*. I would suggest, therefore, that whether the story Odysseus tells was actually traditional, it is effectively "true," except that the narrator is not Idomeneus' brother, but Odysseus: the lies are not in the story, but in the narrating, in the connection the speaker makes between the story and the here-and-now. I would suggest that in traditional referentiality, "lies like truth" are not just believable fictions (the phrase's denotation), but something more precise: they are falsehoods that are both possible multiforms of traditional material and that function effectively for their speakers. Odysseus' lie is especially like truth because he can base it closely on what "really" happened; but he imitates truth closely in order to achieve a particular effect. Theognis uses "lies like truth" of the Homeric Nestor (714), probably because his stories are such effective motivators of action.

Hesiod's Nereus combines truthfulness with justice:

> Νηρέα δ' ἀψευδέα καὶ ἀληθέα γείνατο Πόντος
> πρεσβύτατον παίδων· αὐτὰρ καλέουσι γέροντα,
> οὕνεκα νημερτής τε καὶ ἤπιος, οὐδὲ θεμίστων
> λήθεται, ἀλλὰ δίκαια καὶ ἤπια δήνεα οἶδεν· (233–36)
>
> Pontos generated Nereus, without falsehood and truthful, eldest of his children. But they call him "the old man" because he is accurate and kind, and he does not forget traditional rules, but knows just and kind plans.

He is the "Old Man" as the emblematic elder. His truthtelling cannot be separated from his adherence to traditional social norms and his benignity.[22] Being ἤπιος ("gentle") is also the characteristic of Odysseus as good king in the *Odyssey* (ἤπιος "as a father" 2.47, 2.234, 5.12).

Again, most criticism of poetic lies, by poets themselves or others, are criticisms of the portrayal of the gods or of the depiction of

[22] The passage is difficult. R. Merkelbach, "Konjekturen zu Hesiod," *Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica* 27–28 (1956), 289 has argued that Hesiod eymologizes the name "Nereus" as a combination of νημερτής and ἦρα ("they call the old man 'Nereus' because . . .". As West, *Hesiod* Theogony points out ad loc. (p. 234), however, the passage would prima facie be explaining the epithet, not the name. On Nereus, see M. Détienne, *Les maîtres de vérité dans la grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1973), 29–50.

heroes about whose merits the speaker has strong feelings. Stesichorus' palinode(s) clearly depend on Helen's divinity (193–94 *PMGF*). Stesichorus, according to the anecdote, composed his palinode after the goddess struck him with blindness as punishment for telling the traditional story. This anecdote surely arose from the poem itself, which must have claimed authority for the new story in the anger of the goddess at the usual tale. Other criticisms appear to concern self-interest. The poet of the *Hymn to Dionysos* (I.1–9) says that those who make various claims about the birthplace of Dionysos are lying:

> οἱ μὲν γὰρ Δρακάνῳ σ', οἱ δ' Ἰκάρῳ ἠνεμοέσσῃ
> φάσ', οἱ δ' ἐν Νάξῳ, δῖον γένος εἰραφιῶτα,
> οἱ δέ σ' ἐπ' Ἀλφειῷ ποταμῷ βαθυδινήεντι
> κυσαμένην Σεμέλην τεκέειν Διὶ τερπικεραύνῳ,
> ἄλλοι δ' ἐν Θήβῃσιν ἄναξ σε λέγουσι γενέσθαι
> ψευδόμενοι
>
> For some say in Drakanon, some in windy Ikaros, some in Naxos, divine child Eiraphiota, and yet others say that by the deep-eddying Alpheios, pregnant Semele bore you to Zeus who delights in thunders, and others, lord, say that you were born in Thebes—all lying

He is surely implying that these locales have invented traditions to boost their own prestige, while he himself demonstrates his purity by placing the birth of Dionysos "far from people." The nearest thing to a Panhellenic tradition is the one that places the god's birth in Thebes, but this poet locates the birth outside the Greek world altogether, where nobody can claim it. In this instance, the opposition between local and Panhellenic is clear, since the poet finds a position without locality. "Panhellenic" in opposition to "local" is thus one possible aspect of the poetic rhetoric of disinterestedness.

Similarly, the Muses initially call the shepherds "mere bellies." Nagy has argued that the belly represents physical need; poets who depend on patrons prefer local, "untrue" versions that flatter their patrons to Panhellenic ones.[23] The initiation would thus represent Hesiod's transformation from such a local poet to one with Panhellenic claims. As I have just suggested, the opposition between self-interested and disinterested is larger than that between local and Panhellenic. Nor is there any reason to think that Hesiod is already

[23] G. Nagy, "Hesiod," In *Ancient Writers*, ed. T. J. Luce (New York, 1982), 47–49 and P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polytropos. Intertextual Readings in the* Odyssey *and the* Iliad (Ithaca, 1987), 196 n. 14, 234–35; both develop Svenbro, *Parola e marmo*, 57–65.

a poet, though a false one, before his initiation.[24] Still, the word "belly" as an opening insult may imply that Hesiod's initiation removes him from a condition of dependency and that as a poet he will not be forced by want to say whatever his patrons wish to hear.

If we combine these strands, the "lies like truth" of Hesiod's Muses would be recognizable, at least for the wise listener. The stories in such false poetry would promote particular interests, like Odysseus' lies or the stories about Dionysos' birthplace, or would not conform to proper social values, as inspired speech does when it is true, like Nereus' speech and that of the good king. The lies are believable because they are generated exactly the way true poetry is, by recombinations of traditional materials. The likeness to truth is possible because all the products of the Muses have traditional content and follow traditional aesthetics. The lies, though, tell the audience what the poet thinks the audience wants to hear. Hesiod, like Homer, defines his own poetry as disinterested, but by confronting the problem of false tradition instead of evading it. The Muses provide the tradition, which contains both truth and falsehood; the audience can judge on the basis of the poet's ethos and the ethos of the performance. Like Homeric epic, Hesiodic poetry, by calling on the Muse, places itself completely under the sign of traditionality. There are probably innovations in the theogony Hesiod offers, but these are unmarked. The *Theogony*, though, by inviting the listener to be aware that false tradition exists, demands more attention to the social relevance of the performance—attention Homeric poetry seeks to avoid. The listener, however, needs to consider not just the particular performance occasion, but the widest possible context. If the song has been so adapted to its performance occasion that it flatters local interests or particular patrons, it cannot be true. The hearer will accept the poem as true if its social and metaphysical messages are acceptable within the hearer's view of the world, and if Hesiod seems to be trustworthy.

If the *Theogony* differs from Homer in locating poetic authority in the poet and the poet's social reality, while still maintaining a claim of independence and disinterest, the *Works and Days* stands even farther from the Homeric type. In the *Works and Days*, the poet presents himself as an acknowledged partisan. If the audience accepts the

[24] See Griffith, "Personality in Hesiod," 49.

justice of his arguments, they will also accept his stories. At the opening, he evokes the Muses only briefly, before turning to Zeus. Poetic authority here depends less on the Muses than on Zeus, that is, on the justice of his case and his wider cause. Hesiod explicitly corrects his earlier belief in a single Eris (11–26), and so implicitly corrects his account of the birth of Eris in the *Theogony* (225). Self-correction would not be possible if the Muses guaranteed the literal truth of all the contents of the song, nor if the poet believed that his credibility required infallibility. As a demonstration of an honest character, however, self-correction can hardly be surpassed. What matters is not access to truth, but the conscientious effort to speak honestly. The self-correction also demonstrates that Hesiod does not regard the *Theogony* only as an ephemeral performance. The birth of Eris is a detail. The children of Night are very unlikely to belong to a Panhellenic genealogy, and they are not fixed by cult. A bard would not need to include them in every performance, or to present exactly the same ones. Giving Night these particular children represents Hesiod's, or his teachers', way of thinking about the world.[25] That Hesiod refers back to his composition in this way shows that he understands it as a (more-or-less) fixed text—"fixity" being always a relative term for poems still close to a tradition of composition-in-performance.[26]

In *Works and Days*, Hesiod cites the Muse when he admits that he lacks personal experience of seafaring, so that she might seem like the Homeric Muse, a provider of information (662). But seafaring lore of this kind is not knowledge that would be inaccessible without supernatural help, nor is it clear why rules of seafaring should require a particular effort of memory.[27] Ordinarily, as Hesiod admits, experience would be the source of such knowledge. The Muse here is transparently what Hesiod has heard. For such practical information, the tradition is a reliable source. Hesiod's only real-life experience with the sea, his crossing of the Euripos, leads directly to his

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[25] See West, *Hesiod* Theogony, 34–36.

[26] I strongly disagree with Svenbro's argument at *Parola e marmo*, 69–70 that contestation or self-correction demands writing. A singer who repeats a song many times stabilizes it: see A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), 94–95.

[27] Prophetic knowledge was required to sail to unknown shores, as Kalchas guided the Achaians to Troy (*Il.* 1.71–72), but Hesiod offers everyday advice.

proof of poetic authority, the prize he won at Amphidamas' games—which he dedicated to the Muses of Helikon (651–59). In this context, Hesiod has no anxiety about relying on the truth of the tradition.

Ἀλήθεια in Homer is not associated with divinities, but with mortals, and it is not used of prophetic speech; speech is ἀληθής when the speaker is conscientious, avoiding both carelessness and deceit.[28] Hesiod's Muses speak ἀληθέα as well as falsehoods because they stand for the process of transmission. By identifying the tradition with the Muses, who chose Hesiod for an initiation presumably denied others, Hesiod still privileges himself; but in the *Theogony*, where he claims impartiality, he cannot base his claim to truth on the tradition alone.

Pindar goes farther. He completely denies the Homeric mystification by connecting poetic stories closely with everyday speech. Attributing praise of the victor to the Muse would be difficult, and epinicians are explicitly occasional and partisan. Still, one would imagine that the epinician poet could use the Muses' support when he turns away from the immediate occasion, especially when he narrates myth. Indeed, Pindar constantly invokes and evokes the Muses.[29] Yet in the epinicia he never cites them as an authority for his versions of a story, or for any other point of truth.[30] Instead, they render songs beautiful and appropriate. When Pindar expresses his hope that Hieron will win the chariot race at Olympia (*O.* 1.112), he says the Muse is storing an "extremely mighty bolt" for him to throw—that is, the Muse alone can guarantee than the poet will be able to achieve a song equal to the event. In one revealing passage, he cites Adrastos' praise of Amphiaraos, then follows it with his own claim:

> οὔτε δύσηρις ἐὼν οὔτ' ὦν φιλόνικος ἄγαν,
> καὶ μέγαν ὅρκον ὀμόσσαις τοῦτό γέ οἱ σαφέως
> μαρτυρήσω· μελίφθογ-
> γοι δ' ἐπιτρέψοντι Μοῖσαι. (*Ol.* 6.19–21)

[28] On the truth-vocabulary of archaic poetry, see T. Cole, "Archaic Truth," *Quaderni Urbinati*, n.s., 13 (1983): 7–28.

[29] See G. Gianotti, *Per una poetica Pindarica* (Turin, 1975), 41–68.

[30] He does echo *Il.* 2.484 in *Paean* 6 (51–58), in connection with a story of which "it is possible for the gods to persuade the wise, but mortals cannot discover it"; see S. Radt, *Pindars zweiter und sechster Paian* (Amsterdam, 1958), 121–26.

> Though not quarrelsome nor one too fond of victory, yet I shall swear a great oath and bear clear witness for him that this at least is so; and the honey-voiced Muses will permit me.[31]

The Muses do not bear witness or take an oath. The poet must stand by his own words. The Muses allow him—that is, although such vehement insistence threatens to break the generic rules, the Muses trust the poet: the Muses, then, are the meta-rules, the power that tells the poet when unconventionality is the better course. To achieve the correct balance in epinician is extraordinarily difficult, and Pindar calls on them to confirm not the truth of his claims, but his tact and sense of due measure.

Often, Pindar cites oral tradition as the source of his narratives: "they say" that Ixion on the wheel tells mortals to repay their benefactors with kind acts of reciprocity (*P.* 2.22). The story of how Achilleus could outrun deer is one told by those of former times (*N.* 3.52). "They say" that Ino received immortality among the Nereids (*O.* 2.28); "they tell" how the flood retreated by Zeus' art (*O.* 9.49), and that Zeus begot Aiakos (*N.* 7.84); "it is said" that Pitane bore Euadne to Poseidon (*O.* 6.29), that Hektor's fame flowered by the Skamandros (*N.* 9.39), and that Zeus watched the birth of Apollo and Artemis from Mt. Kynthos. "The ancient reports of humanity" tell the story of how Rhodes, still beneath the sea when the world was apportioned among the gods, came to belong to Helios (*O.* 7.54). So, too, Bacchylides cites such oral tradition for Herakles' descent into Hades (5.57). None of these passages seems intended to create doubt about the story; that many people repeat a tale generally confirms its validity—even though Pindar does not always believe what is said. What "they say" here may be what earlier canonical poetry said; Hektor's fame, of course, is established by the *Iliad.* It is not likely, though, that every time Pindar attributes a mythological "fact" to oral tradition he has a text in mind. Indeed, the scholia on *O.* 7.54 (p. 222 Drachmann) say that the story was not attested before Pindar, and suggest that he refers to learning from the old

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[31] B. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: the Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York, 1885), ad loc. (p. 175), glosses "will approve," "will not say me nay"; while Race's Loeb reads "assist." These glosses, though, depend on the context rather than the normal semantic field of the verb. S. Goldhill, *The Poet's Voice. Essays on Poetics and Greek Literature* (Cambridge, 1991), 149, translates "entrust," but then says that the poet is "thus set as the agent of the divine." He is perhaps an agent, but an agent thus entrusted with the power to use his discretion in making such bold claims.

people of the island. For Pindar, there is no significant difference between what people say and what poets sing, except that poetry has more power to convince, and that it lasts more reliably.

Pindaric poetry fights ephemerality. If the epinicia are not repeated as composed, they cannot serve their purpose of spreading and immortalizing the victor's fame. Pindar thus composes in a world where performances are oral, but fixed texts are available for comparison: he cannot rely on the fluidity of traditional referentiality. He cannot use the Muse to support the truth of his claims, because poetry has already made claims that he wishes to reject. When he refers to false poetry, though, he does not mention the Muses. In *O.* 1, Pindar attributes the success of false poetry to Charis; in *N.* 7, he again avoids connecting the Muses directly with Homer's falsehood, but blames its popularity on *sophia*, the poet's own skill.[32] But he does not refer truth to the Muses, either.

Instead, he employs a full battery of devices to support his claims. For the past, Pindar in general assumes that traditional accounts have a true core; the narrator needs to find false accretions and properly fill the resulting gaps. His criteria for evaluating traditions are not difficult to identify. First, the sources should be reliable. Second, any story that might displease the gods should be avoided, but those that truly malign them must be untrue. The context does not always demand polemic about false stories; sometimes a quiet correction is appropriate, as when Pindar stresses that Apollo needed no outside help to perceive Koronis' unfaithfulness (*P.* 3.26–30). Third, stories must be consistent with each other, and with the later history that continues them. The past and present inform each other. That the victor has won at the games proves that the gods have favored him; it is therefore proper to look for signs of divine favor in the past. Pindar does not expect that the story of a victor and his family will completely lack reverses or moral ambiguities, but he always assumes a very high level of narrative coherence. Pindar can self-consciously and in good faith create a usable past, because his beliefs about the divinely-ordained nature of the world demand that

[32] C. Carey, *A Commentary on Five Odes of Pindar: Pythian 2, Pythian 9, Nemean 1, Nemean 7, Isthmian 8* (Salem, N.H., 1981), 144. D. Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One: a Commentary*, Phoenix Supplement 15 (Toronto, 1982) on 30 (p. 64), following Gianotti, *Per una poetica Pindarica*, 76–80, argues for a distinction between the personification of poetic attractiveness and the divinity Charis. I do not see how such a distinction could be maintained.

the past be usable. Finally, where he has no evidence about why a character in the past acted as he did, he relies on human experience. For his praise of the victor, where he claims direct knowledge, he cites specific tests and touchstones, calls on the audience to use their own experience, and presents himself as a witness.

So, for example, at *O.* 4.18 he concludes his praise of the victor by announcing: οὐ ψεύδεϊ τέγξω/λόγον· διάπειρά τοι βροτῶν ἔλεγχος ("I will not taint my account with a lie; trial is truly the test of mortals".) Placing poets directly beside non-poetic purveyors of tradition, he announces that what people say is the only source available:

> ὀπιθόμβροτον αὔχημα δόξας
> οἶον ἀποιχομένων ἀνδρῶν δίαιταν μανύει
> καὶ λογίοις καὶ ἀοιδοῖς. οὐ φθίνει Κροί-
> σου φιλόφρων ἀρετά.
> τὸν δὲ ταύρῳ χαλκέῳ καυτῆρα νηλέα νόον
> ἐχθρὰ Φάλαριν κατέχει παντᾷ φάτις,
> οὐδέ νιν φόρμιγγες ὑπωρόφιαι κοινανίαν
> μαλθακὰν παίδων ὀάροισι δέκονται. (*P.* 1.92–98)

> . . . the posthumous acclaim of fame
> alone reveals the life of men who are dead and gone
> to both chroniclers and poets. The kingly
> excellence of Croesus does not perish,
> but universal execration overwhelms Phalaris, that man
> of pitiless spirit who burned men in his bronze bull,
> and no lyres in banquet halls welcome him
> in gentle fellowship with boys' voices.

In such a passage, what people say about a living man, what they say about a dead man, and what poets sing of both living and dead slip into each other: no chorus of boys "receives" Phalaris, as if the song were intended to receive him at a homecoming. He makes the same association of ordinary speech with song at *N.* 6.29–30: παροιχομένων γὰρ ἀνέρων,/ἀοιδαὶ καὶ λόγοι τὰ καλά σφιν ἔργ' ἐκόμισαν: "when men are dead and gone, songs and words preserve for them their noble deeds."

Yet Pindar looks most closely at the transmission of stories when the "eyewitnesses" are unreliable and malicious. For Pindar, as for Hesiod, partisanship on behalf of the wrong party is the origin of false stories, while the poet's central commitment to the good of the community is the proof of his reliability. In *Olympian* 1, the poet begins his meditation on the false story about Pelops by considering

the general tendency of human report to go beyond the truth and to deceive:

> ἦ θαυματὰ πολλά, καί πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀλαθῆ λόγον
> δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι (28–29)

> Yes, wonders are many, but then too, I think, in men's talk
> stories are embellished beyond the true account
> and deceive by means of
> elaborate lies.

Pindar's difficult language quickly turns ordinary speech, βροτῶν φάτις, into tales that are elaborately crafted, δεδαιδαλμένοι and ποικίλοις. These terms suggest poetry, and the implication becomes even stronger in the following lines:

> Χάρις δ', ἅπερ ἅπαντα τεύχει τὰ μείλιχα θνατοῖς,
> ἐπιφέροισα τιμὰν καὶ ἄπιστον ἐμήσατο πιστὸν
> ἔμμεναι τὸ πολλάκις·
> ἁμέραι δ' ἐπίλοιποι
> μάρτυρες σοφώτατοι.
> ἔστι δ' ἀνδρὶ φάμεν ἐοικὸς ἀμφὶ δαι-
> μόνων καλά· μείων γὰρ αἰτία. (30–35)

> For Charis, who fashions all things pleasant for mortals,
> by bestowing honors makes even what is unbelievable
> often believed;
> yet days to come
> are the wisest witnesses.
> It is proper for a man to speak
> well of the gods, for less is the blame.

Charis bestows prestige on them. This *charis* is surely poetry, although we do not know of any particular poetic target for Pindar's attack here. The argument for disbelieving the false story rests first on distance and time, and then on the knowledge that it is better to say only good things about the gods.

Why are days to come the best witnesses? Since the passage in *O.* 1 is generalizing about false stories, time need not be especially relevant to the story about Pelops, but what makes time an appropriate foil for the power of poetic Charis? Most commentators take the phrase to mean that "time reveals the truth."[33] In this case, however,

[33] So Gildersleeve, *Olympian and Pythian Odes*, 132; Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One*, 68–69; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico, Ca., 1982), 52.

time has not revealed the truth without Pindar's help, so the generalization cannot imply that the action of time by itself has shown that the story is false. Rather, time provides evidence the audience should use to recognize that it is false. In other Pindaric references to time as proof or witness, the emphasis lies on the long-term outcome, which the later audience can see: thus at *O.* 10.52–55, "Time who alone tests real truth" stands by at Herakles' celebration at Olympia, because the games were going to endure, and the audience can see that they continue. In *O.* 1, the role of time is not quite so obvious. It is perhaps easier for those removed from the event to understand it, because distance mitigates the envy that, as Pindar will soon explain, is the source of the tale. Stories, moreover, are actions, with potential consequences, and the wise hearer evaluates them by evaluating their outcomes. Since the false story about Pelops maligns the gods, rejection is easy, since the outcome of such speech cannot be good.

Later Pindar identifies the actual source of the story in the gossip of the envious neighbors:

> ὡς δ' ἄφαντος ἔπελες, οὐδὲ ματρὶ πολλὰ μαιόμενοι φῶτες ἄγαγον,
> ἔννεπε κρυφᾶ τις αὐτίκα φθονερῶν γειτόνων,
> ὕδατος ὅτι σε πυρὶ ζέοισαν εἰς ἀκμὰν
> μαχαίρᾳ τάμον κάτα μέλη . . . (46–49)

> But when you disappeared, and despite much searching
> no men returned you to your mother,
> one of the envious neighbors immediately said in secret
> that into water boiling rapidly on the fire
> they cut up your limbs with a knife . . .

Gossip begins immediately, and is "secret": the neighbors know that their speech is malicious and do not blaspheme the gods in public. Eventually, however, their rumors become common speech, the βροτῶν φάτις. From there, it remains only for poetry to provide the false tales with prestige. By identifying the story's origin with envy, the poet calls even more firmly on his audience to reject it. The poet concludes by repeating his refusal to speak ill of the gods, because slanderers do not prosper: ἀκέρδεια λέλογχεν θαμινὰ κακαγόρους (53). He opposes the envy that leads to falsehood with the consideration for long-term outcomes that leads to rejecting such falsehood.[34]

[34] For the opposition between envy and foresight, see P. Bulman, *Phthonos in*

Pindar's own version, in which Poseidon carries Pelops away, entranced by his beauty, here has no source at all, except the parallel story of Zeus' rape of Ganymede:

ἔνθα δευτέρῳ χρόνῳ
ἦλθε καὶ Γανυμήδης
Ζηνὶ τωὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ χρέος (43–45)

where at a later time
Ganymede came as well
for the same service to Zeus.

The parallel, by indicating that such abductions are told of gods, confirms the credibility of the story.[35] Yet it also makes it easy to conclude that Pindar has no source for his story except his own sensitivity to what one should say about the gods and how they behave.[36] This version leads directly to Pindar's account of the original chariot race at Olympia, in which it is (apparently) Poseidon's gift of horses that enables Pelops to defeat Oinomaos (the narrative of the race itself is extremely compressed). Pelops' courage and Poseidon's erotic gratitude become the cause of the victory, replacing Myrtilos' cheating.[37]

In *N.* 8, false speech is again closely related to envy:

ἵσταμαι δὴ ποσσὶ κούφοις, ἀμπνέων τε πρίν τι φάμεν.
πολλὰ γὰρ πολλᾷ λέλεκται, ν⟨εα⟩ρὰ δ᾽ ἐξευ-
ρόντα δόμεν βασάνῳ
ἐς ἔλεγχον, ἅπας κίνδυνος· ὄψον δὲ λόγοι φθονεροῖσιν,
—ἅπτεται δ᾽ ἐσλῶν ἀεί, χειρόνεσσι δ᾽ οὐκ ἐρίζει.
κεῖνος καὶ Τελαμῶνος δάψεν υἱὸν φασγάνῳ ἀμφικυλίσαις.
ἦ τιν᾽ ἄγλωσσον μέν, ἦτορ δ᾽ ἄλκιμον, λάθα κατέχει
ἐν λυγρῷ νείκει· μέγιστον δ᾽ αἰόλῳ ψεύδει γέρας ἀντέταται.

Pindar, University of California Publications in Classical Studies, 35 (Berkeley, 1992), 9–13.

[35] E. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica II: The First Isthmian Ode*, University of California Publications in Classical Philology, 18 (Berkeley, 1962), 60 n. 66; Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One*, 79.

[36] Nagy, *Pindar's Homer*, 116–35, argues that Pindar's myth of Pelops is as traditional as the one he rejects, but this requires that he interpret ἀντία προτέρων tendentiously.

[37] On the compression, see A. Hurst, "L'emploi du temps chez Pindare," in *Pindare*, Entretiens Hardt 31 (Geneva, 1984), 186–89. There is disagreement about whether Pindar's (implied) version of the race itself is an innovation; I agree that it probably is with A. Köhnken, "Pindar as Innovator: Poseidon Hippios and the Relevance of the Pelops Story in *Olympian* 1," *Classical Quarterly* 24 (1974): 199–206, against Gerber *Pindar's Olympian One*, xii, but the point is not crucial here.

κρυφίαισι γὰρ ἐν ψάφοις Ὀδυσσῆ Δαναοὶ θεράπευσαν·
χρυσέων δ᾽ Αἴας στερηθεὶς ὅπλων φόνῳ πάλαισεν.
ἦ μὰν ἀνόμοιά γε δᾳοισιν ἐν θερμᾷ χροῒ
ἕλκεα ῥῆξαν πελεμιζόμενοι
ὑπ᾽ ἀλεξιμβρότῳ λόγχᾳ, τὰ μὲν ἀμφ᾽ Ἀχιλεῖ νεοκτόνῳ,
ἄλλων τε μόχθων ἐν πολυφθόροις
ἁμέραις. ἐχθρὰ δ᾽ ἄρα πάρφασις ἦν καὶ πάλαι,
αἱμύλων μύθων ὁμόφοιτος, δολοφραδής, κακοποιὸν ὄνειδος·
ἃ τὸ μὲν λαμπρὸν βιᾶται, τῶν δ᾽ ἀφάντων κῦδος ἀντείνει
σαθρόν (19–34)

But here I stand on light feet
and draw breath before uttering a word.
For many things have been said in many ways, but
to discover new ones and put them to the touchstone
for testing is sheer danger, since words are dessert
to the envious, and envy fastens
always on the good, but has no quarrel with lesser men.

It was that which feasted on the son of Telamon
when it rolled him onto his sword.
Truly, oblivion overwhelms many a man whose tongue
is speechless, but heart is bold,
in a grievous quarrel; and the greatest prize
has been offered up to shifty falsehood.
For with secret votes
the Danaans favored Odysseus, while Ajax,
stripped of the golden armor, wrestled with a gory death.

In truth, unequal indeed were the wounds they tore
in the warm flesh of their foes
with succoring spears when they were hard pressed
both in fighting over Achilles newly slain
and in the murderous days of their other
labors. Yes, hateful deception existed even long ago,
the companion of flattering tales,
guileful contriver, evil-working disgrace,
which represses what is illustrious,
but holds up for obscure men a glory that is rotten.

Pindar begins with his own problem: the poet's speech is to be put to the test. It is not likely that the "many ways" of πολλὰ γὰρ πολλᾷ λέλεκται are stylistic or musical differences, since those do not seem to be at issue here, but content: poets of the past have told many stories differently, and audiences tolerate their contradictions. New songs, though, are not received so uncritically. The new song is probably praise of the victor, not anything in the myth of Aias, where there seems to be no dangerous innovation. To follow the line of

argument, however, it is not really necessary to specify what Pindar here intends as the contents of the song, since the worrisome considerations he raises deflect him from presenting it here.[38] In itself, Pindar might not fear the danger of criticism, confident in his truth-telling; but because his speech is speech of praise (whether direct victor-praise or not, epinician speech is praise), it will certainly arouse envy. Speech is a delicacy, ὄψον for the envious. It is a food, because it nourishes their envy; but it is not like bread, because it cannot satisfy them. Hearing another praised inspires more envy in the envious, and envy is by nature incapable of satiety. On the other hand, envious detraction proves that the praise is justified, since only the noble are its objects.

So he proceeds to the example, Aias. As soon as the example begins, however, Pindar's emphasis begins to shift from envy as the cause of his failure to win Achilleus' arms to rhetoric. It is not entirely obvious whether the envy is the Achaians', Odysseus', or shared. The Achaians must be envious. The "secret votes" resemble the talk of Tantalos' neighbors; envy hesitates to expose itself publicly. Yet Odysseus speaks a "shifty lie," and lying too is the product of envy—but since the lie is in Odysseus' immediate self-interest, envy need not be his motive. Aias himself belongs to those unable to speak, and "forgetfulness" is the result. Envy, then, by itself does not render a fair judgment impossible; it causes the crowd to "forget" Aias' achievements. By implication, if he had been able to present his own merits with sufficient rhetorical skill, the Achaians would have remembered them. Yet as Pindar considers the obvious superiority of Aias, he decides that the psychological forces he has so far considered are not adequate to explain the judgment. Envy alone could not cause the Greeks to ignore such patent merit. Odysseus' lie must have had special powers: it was ἐχθρὰ πάρφασις. Like envy, hateful persuasion attacks the good. Unlike envy, however, it does not simply leave the obscure alone, but extends corrupt praise to them. Such persuasion thus has the potential to become a sort of counter-tradition, one that ignores the noble and praises the undeserving. Pindar, however, does not continue to follow the development of this ἐχθρὰ πάρφασις.

The achievements of Aias he cites are those related in the *Aethiopis*

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[38] A. Miller, "Phthonos and Parphasis: *Nemean* 8.190–4," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 23 (1982): 111–20, argues convincingly that the "new" is victor-praise, and that *phthonos* and *parphasis* are distinct.

and probably the *Iliad*, while he concludes the poem with an allusion to the Seven against Thebes (50–51). He thereby identifies himself generally with the epic tradition. However, his account of the Judgment of the Arms does not agree with the epic in detail, and he completely suppresses the role of Athena, since he cannot see a divinity as an unfair partisan.[39] Elsewhere, he implies that Homer's account is the basis for all later praise of Aias:

ἀλλ' Ὅμηρός τοι τετίμακεν δι' ἀνθρώπων, ὃς αὐτοῦ
πᾶσαν ὀρθώσαις ἀρετὰν κατὰ ῥάβδον ἔφρασεν
θεσπεσίων ἐπέων λοιποῖς ἀθύρειν. (*I.* 4.55–57)

But Homer, to be sure, has made him honored
   among mankind, who set straight
his entire achievement and declared it with his staff
of divine verses for future men to enjoy.

Pindar does not consider the problem of Homer's sources.

The existence of a corrupt rhetoric creates further problems for the poet's authority. How does Pindar try to convince his audience that his praise is deserved? He implies that there is no guarantee. Following his thoughts about Aias, he demonstrates his sincerity by praying to be sincere:

εἴη μή ποτέ μοι τοιοῦτον ἦθος,
   Ζεῦ πάτερ, ἀλλὰ κελεύθοις
ἁπλόαις ζωᾶς ἐφαπτοίμαν, θανὼν ὡς παισὶ κλέος
μὴ τὸ δύσφαμον προσάψω. χρυσὸν εὔχον-
   ται, πεδίον δ' ἕτεροι
ἀπέραντον, ἐγὼ δ' ἀστοῖς ἁδὼν καὶ χθονὶ γυῖα καλύψαι,
—αἰνέων αἰνητά, μομφὰν δ' ἐπισπείρων ἀλιτροῖς. (*N.* 8.35–39)

May I never have such a disposition,
   father Zeus, but let me travel
the straightforward paths of life,
   so that when I die I may leave my children
no such disreputable fame. Some pray for gold
   others for land
without end, but I pray to find favor with my townsmen
   until I cover my limbs with earth,
praising things praiseworthy, but casting blame on evildoers.

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[39] See F. Nisetich, *Pindar and Homer* (Baltimore, 1989), 18. The secret vote is probably his "invention" (*pace* Nisetich 77–78 n. 9)—that is, he cannot imagine how Aias would not have won in an open ballot.

Even more clearly than Hesiod, then, Pindar makes the reliability of his poetry dependent on his own *ethos*. Thus, although he defines his mission here as distributing both praise and blame, he avoids blaming living individuals, since a propensity for blame is the sign of precisely the malice and envy that leads to falsehood. Instead he ends the poem by claiming that the encomium is as old as its malicious rival, ἐχθρὰ πάρφασις. At least in this poem, the poetic tradition he evokes supports the truth against a false rhetoric by which individuals manipulate the envious crowd to their own advantage. The poet's truth can be recognized because the poet does not exploit envy.

N. 7 raises the topic of false speech, connecting it specifically with Homeric poetry:

> ἐγὼ δὲ πλέον' ἔλπομαι
> λόγον Ὀδυσσέος ἢ πάθαν διὰ τὸν ἁδυεπῆ γενέσθ' Ὅμηρον· (20–21)

> I believe that Odysseus' story
> has become greater than his actual suffering
> because of Homer's sweet verse

Pindar here speaks his own opinion, not relying on any authority beyond common sense and his own character.[40] The narrative of Odysseus' πάθαν is surely the *Odyssey*. Pindar continues with a meditation on why such falsehoods win credit:

> ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσί οἱ ποτανᾷ ⟨τε⟩ μαχανᾷ
> σεμνὸν ἔπεστί τι· σοφία δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις· (22–23)

> for upon his falsehoods[41] and soaring craft
> rests great majesty, and his skill
> deceives with misleading tales.

The language here is reminiscent of *Olympian* 1. Pindar's next point, though, moves away from poetry:

> τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει
> ἦτορ ὅμιλος ἀνδρῶν ὁ πλεῖστος. εἰ γὰρ ἦν
> ἓ τὰν ἀλάθειαν ἰδέμεν, οὔ κεν ὅπλων χολωθεὶς
> ὁ καρτερὸς Αἴας ἔπαξε διὰ φρενῶν
> λευρὸν ξίφος· ὃν κράτιστον Ἀχιλέος ἄτερ μάχᾳ

[40] On ἔλπομαι see G. Most, *The Measures of Praise*, Hypomnemata 83 (Göttingen, 1985), 148.
[41] Race here translates "fictions."

ξανθῷ Μενέλᾳ δάμαρτα κομίσαι θοαῖς
ἐν ναυσὶ πόρευσαν εὐθυπνόου Ζεφύροιο πομπαὶ . . . (23–29)

The great majority
of men have a blind heart, for if they could have seen
the truth, mighty Ajax, in anger over the arms,
would not have planted in his chest
the smooth sword. Except for Achilles, in battle he was the best
whom the favoring breezes of the straight-blowing
Zephyr conducted to the city of Ilos
in swift ships . . .

The blindness of the human mind renders people vulnerable to Homer's lies, and the same blindness led to the suicide of Aias. Pindar attributes Homer's success in overpraising Odysseus and Aias' failure to receive his due to the same psychological cause. *N.* 7 does not necessarily imply the story as *N.* 8 tells it; there is no implication here that Odysseus was malicious or that the Achaians were envious. In this version, the problem is stupidity, pure and simple. Odysseus, of course, is the character in Greek epic who by telling his own story is most responsible for his own praise. Pindar's πάθαν ("suffering"), though it cannot be restricted to the Adventures, certainly suggests them above all (especially since it echoes πολλὰ δ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα, "he suffered many pains on the sea," of *Od.* 1.4).[42] Hence Pindar implies that Homer has caused Odysseus to be regarded at Odysseus' own estimation, and that the mistake is the same one the Achaians made in the Judgment of the Arms. Yet Homer, of course, is Pindar's source for the statement that Aias was best, and by representing Odysseus in the act of self-representation, he gives Pindar the means to criticize his representation. Pindar thus does not reject all poetic tradition, but makes it explicitly subject to criticism.

Pindar, then, has a consistent critical method. Odysseus' praise of himself is not credible, and any tale likely to have been prompted by envy deserves suspicion. On the other hand, Homer's praise of Aias rings true, because it fits the glory of the Aiakids, and the excellences of the Aiginetans. Pindar rejects the traditional story that Tantalos served Pelops to the gods, on the grounds of piety. He assumes, though, that Pelops must have disappeared, giving an incen-

[42] A. Köhnken, *Die Funktion der Mythos bei Pindar* (Berlin, 1971), 55–58, shows how Pindar re-evaluates Homer's Odysseus rather than correcting his facts.

tive to the envious to create the false story. At this point, his need to explain Pelops' disappearance meets the need for an aetiology for the chariot race. Since the chariot race at Olympia is the most prestigious athletic event in the Greek world, it cannot have begun in a deed of treachery. Pelops must have won because he had better horses. Where did he get them? The familiar story of Ganymede and the aristocratic custom of giving valuable gifts to a beloved boy then allow him to find a plausible solution to both problems: Pelops disappeared because he was abducted by a god who gave him the horses—Poseidon, of course. Finally, human experience allows the poet to make further inferences. Tantalos did not murder his son, but Pindar does not reject the story of his punishment, so he considers what a man in a position to feast with the gods would be likely to do: offer nectar and ambrosia to his friends (*O.* 1.60–64).

From this perspective, Pindar is not far from the mainstream of mythography in the early fifth century, and it is not so surprising that he places poets and other storytellers in the same category. They have the same task of providing a believable account by criticizing the available traditions and engaging in reasonable inference about what must have happened. For this practice they claim no divine inspiration. Hecataeus (F 1 FGrH) says that τάδε γράφω, ὥς μοι δοκεῖ ἀληθέα εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων λόγοι πολλοί τε καὶ γελοῖοι· "I write these things as I think they are true: for the accounts of the Greeks are many and absurd."[43] Hecataeus does not mean that he had no method, but naively wrote whatever happened to enter his mind. Rather, in dealing with mythical history, he lacked direct evidence. Therefore he relied on inference based on general principles of probability. Thucydides follows similar principles when he treats the distant past, although his canons of probability are so different from those of Hecataeus that the result is utterly different. However, he emphatically rejects this method when he narrates events recent enough to make it possible for him to find accurate information (1.22.2).[44]

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[43] According to Gerber, *Pindar's Olympian One*, 62–63, G. Nenci, "Una riposta critica delfica alla metodologia ecataica," *Studia Critica* 3 (1964): 269–86 (*non vidi*), sees the statement at *O.* 1.28 that stories go "beyond the true account" as anti-Hecataean polemic: Pindar agrees in rejecting false stories, but counters Hecataean rationality with his Delphic religious sensibility.

[44] See J. Marincola, "Thucydides 1.22.2," *Classical Philology* 84 (1989): 216–23 on Thucydides' use of δοκέω.

Both Pindar and Hecataeus develop Hesiod's decision, faced with multiple and contradictory versions, to acknowledge the impossibility of believing everything the tradition has handed down. Hesiod, however, relies on a general claim of disinterested social utility to support his version. Pindar argues for his modifications, while Hecataeus expects the reader to share his understanding of what is likely. Pindar differs most from Hecataeus in not regarding divine interventions and other miraculous events as inherently incredible. As he says at *P.* 10.48–50, ἐμοὶ δὲ θαυμάσαι/θεῶν τελεσάντων οὐδέν ποτε φαίνεται/ἔμμεν ἄπιστον: "to me, nothing ever seems unbelievable when the gods accomplish it so that I am amazed." Equally, his assumption of deep moral continuity between past and present, which allows him to reason backwards from the present, is peculiar to the epinician. Some of his other basic assumptions about how to evaluate sources, though, are close to those of the logographic tradition. Pindar's critique of the *Odyssey* as based on the self-interested version of Odysseus looks back towards the care with which Homeric poetry seeks to avoid appearing self-interested and forward to the Herodotean habit of providing two alternate versions of a story from blatantly self-promoting sources, like the Persian (1.1.2.–1.2.1) and Phoenician (1.5.2) versions of how Io reached Egypt.[45]

Hecataeus is the first extant author to call his activity "writing." Pindar, by contrast, composes songs, and his Homer too is a performer. Yet both Pindar and Hecataeus clearly work in a world of fixed texts and canonical stories. Pindar does not seem to distinguish between oral tradition and texts. He gives texts the generalized authority of widespread tradition, and oral traditions—if we assume that not every story he cites or disputes comes from a fixed text—the fixity of texts. The existence of variant versions becomes more problematic the more textualized their existence. In Hesiod's work, the only more-or-less fixed text clearly visible is his own. He and his audience are aware of contradictory stories, but do not set them beside each other for comparison. Stesichorus rejects a truly Panhellenic story, not a specific version by a specific poet. By the early fifth century, though, there is clearly a canon of songs and stories, within and against which both poet and logographer compose. Criticism is

[45] See D. Fehling, *Die Quellenangaben bei Herodot* (Berlin, 1971), 42–44, 79–82 for the "Wahrung der Parteistandpunkte."

the product of canonization; but the canon includes both genuine fixed texts and well-known stories not confined to texts, without distinguishing them.[46] Such conflation of the oral tradition with particular texts is characteristic of the fifth-century transition from oral to literate attitudes. So is the critical treatment of traditions so characteristic not only of logography, but of Greek poetry.

[46] This conflation of oral tradition with particular texts is still evident in Thucydides. At 1.20.2 he refutes the (popular) beliefs of the Athenians about the tyrannicides (agreeing in essentials with Herodotus); at 20.3 he attributes to the belief of the Greeks at large details about Sparta that appear in Herodotus.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FROM ORALITY TO LITERACY? THE CASE OF THE PARAPEGMA

Robert Hannah

I. *The Parapegma*

Introduction

The smooth functioning of an ordered society still today depends on the possession by that society of a means of regularizing its activities according to a calendar. Different interests—political, economic, religious, agricultural—produce even nowadays different ways of coordinating human activities and the natural passage of time and season. The first steps towards the rational development of a sun-based calendar in Greece are to be seen in the archaic and classical periods, the very time when alphabetic literacy also made its impact on Greek society. There already exists a debate about the connections between literacy and the development of rational thought. The purpose of this paper is to investigate what relationship, if any, existed between the development of the calendar and the growth of literacy.

Homer and Hesiod

Our earliest record in Greek of the use of the stars as a chronological device occurs in Homer's *Iliad.* At 18.483–89, for instance, the poet describes the decoration placed by Hephaistos on a new shield for the Greek hero, Achilleus:

> ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ', ἐν δ' οὐρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν,
> ἠέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθουσαν,
> ἐν δὲ τὰ τείρεα πάντα, τά τ' οὐρανὸς ἐστεφάνωται,
> Πληϊάδας θ' Ὑάδας τε τό τε σθένος Ὠρίωνος
> Ἄρκτόν θ', ἣν καὶ Ἄμαξαν ἐπίκλησιν καλέουσιν,
> ἥ τ' αὐτοῦ στρέφεται καί τ' Ὠρίωνα δοκεύει,
> οἴη δ' ἄμμορός ἐστι λοετρῶν Ὠκεανοῖο.

> He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water,
> and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness,
> and on it all the constellations that festoon the heavens,
> the Pleiades and the Hyades and the strength of Orion
> and the Bear, whom men give also the name of the Wagon,
> who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion
> and she alone is never plunged in the wash of the Ocean.
> (trans. R. Lattimore)

It may be argued that the astronomical content of the decoration of the shield is very season-specific. Star observations were made by the Greeks, as by other cultures, typically just before sunrise or just after sunset. As the Pleiades, the Hyades and Orion *rose* one after the other just before dawn in the time of Homer (ca. 750 B.C.E.), the Bear, in its circular path around the north celestial pole, lay directly north, at its lower crossing (transit) of the observer's north-south line (the meridian). This occurred about May-to-June in our terms, and signaled for Homer's audience the time of summer harvesting. When the Pleiades, the Hyades and Orion *set* one after the other just before dawn, the Bear again lay directly north, but this time at its upper crossing of the meridian. This took place around November, and signaled the time for plowing and sowing (hence we might see the significance of the Bear's second name, the Wagon).[1]

This conjunction between stars and the agricultural seasons is better known from its more extensive usage by Hesiod, not long afterwards (ca. 700 B.C.E.), in his didactic agricultural poem, *Works and Days*. The instance from Homer in which I have suggested we are contemplating the time of winter plowing, with the dawn setting of the Pleiades, the Hyades and Orion and the upper transit of the Bear, is in fact recorded explicitly by Hesiod, minus the mention of the Bear (614–17).

In all, Hesiod provides nine observations of the risings or settings of five stars or star-groups—Sirius is mentioned once, while the Pleiades, the Hyades, Orion and Arcturus are all noted twice—and he adds the culmination of Orion and Sirius to the rise of Arcturus. The summer and winter solstices are each utilized once as markers for certain activities.

[1] See J. H. Phillips, "The Constellations on Achilles' Shield (*Iliad* 18.485–89)," *Liverpool Classical Monthly* 5, no. 8 (1980): 179–80; and, for a response, R. Hannah, "The Constellations on Achilles' Shield (*Iliad* 18.485–89)," *Electronic Antiquity* 2, no. 4 (1994).

In most cases, Hesiod times particular activities by reference purely to the occasion of the rising, setting or transit of the stars. But in three instances he indicates the appropriate time for agricultural or nautical events by reference to the elapse of a certain number of days from a celestial event (385–87; 564–70; 663–65):

> αἳ δή τοι νύκτας τε καὶ ἤματα τεσσαράκοντα
> κεκρύφαται, αὖτις δὲ περιπλομένου ἐνιαυτοῦ
> φαίνονται τὰ πρῶτα χαρασσομένοιο σιδήρου.

> The Pleiades are hidden for forty nights and forty
> days, and then, as the turn of the year reaches
> that point
> they show again, at the time you first sharpen
> your iron.

> εὖτ᾽ ἂν δ᾽ ἑξήκοντα μετὰ τροπὰς ἠελίοιο
> χειμέρι᾽ ἐκτελέσει Ζεὺς ἤματα, δή ῥα τότ᾽ ἀστήρ
> Ἀρκτοῦρος προλιπὼν ἱερὸν ῥόον Ὠκεανοῖο
> πρῶτον παμφαίνων ἐπιτέλλεται ἀκροκνέφαιος·
> τὸν δὲ μέτ᾽ ὀρθρογόη Πανδιονὶς ὦρτο χελιδών
> ἐς φάος ἀνθρώποις, ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο.
> τὴν φθάμενος οἴνας περιταμνέμεν· ὣς γὰρ ἄμεινον.

> Now, when Zeus has brought to completion
> sixty more winter
> days, after the sun has turned in his course,
> the star
> Arcturus, leaving behind the sacred stream
> of the ocean, first begins to rise and shine at the edges
> of evening.
> After him, the treble-crying swallow,
> Pandion's daughter,
> comes into the sight of men when spring's just
> at the beginning.
> Be there before her. Prune your vines.

> ἤματα πεντήκοντα μετὰ τροπὰς ἠελίοιο,
> ἐς τέλος ἐλθόντος θέρεος, καματώδεος ὥρης,
> ὡραῖος πέλεται θνητοῖς πλόος·

> For fifty days, after the turn
> of the summer solstice,
> when the wearisome season of the hot weather
> goes to its conclusion
> then is the timely season for men to voyage.

(trans. R. Lattimore)

Harald Reiche has argued that only practical motives would provide the farmer with the incentive to use day-counts, and that the day-counts themselves would have to be expressed in simple numerical terms.[2] The three instances of the use of day-counts in Hesiod's calendar satisfy these criteria: they refer to the practical tasks of harvesting the winter seed, pruning vines, and sailing in safety; and they utilize numbers which are divisible by five or ten. Overall, Reiche finds Hesiod's calendar elegant in its parsimonious but highly efficient choice of very few celestial events to correspond directly with the pivotal periods of the agricultural year; in its reliance on direct visual verification of those events and not on a written record; and in its only occasional use of moderate day-counts. No significant level of either literacy or numeracy is demanded by it.[3]

It may be thought, however, that Hesiod's day-counts represent a difficulty, in that Reiche does not indicate how anyone could accurately keep count of even moderately sized numbers such as forty, fifty or sixty. It is true that in the case of the longest period, of sixty days, another type of observation is used to help the farmer capture the appropriate time for pruning vines—the appearance not of a star but of a bird, the swallow. But no such assistance is provided in the case of harvesting the winter seed, and for judging when sailing can be conducted in safety the poet provides only the rough-and-ready association of the time with the end of the hot season. Of course, it may be that accuracy was not an absolute requirement, given the nature of the tasks, which were dependant on broader climatic conditions. Therefore, the very roundness of the numbers may imply a looseness of timing rather than a particular sharpness. Nevertheless, numbers are used. While we cannot entirely dismiss the possibility that they are the product more of artificial organization than of careful observation, we should nonetheless allow that they may well imply a physical means of counting the actual passage of days, and that this mechanism may have been a crude ancestor to the next stage in the development of the Greek star-calendar.

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[2] H. A. T. Reiche, "Fail-safe Stellar Dating: Forgotten Phases," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 119 (1989): 45.

[3] Reiche, "Fail-safe Stellar Dating," 41–43; but note how Reiche is forced for the sake of his argument to insert the Hyades into Hesiod's lists at times when the poet does not mention them, e.g. the dawn risings of the Pleiades and Orion.

Meton and Euctemon

After Hesiod's relatively rudimentary, but seemingly effective, star-calendar for farmers and sailors, the next stage in the development of this type of time-keeping device is not encountered until the late fifth century B.C.E. in Athens. This is in the form of what was called a parapegma, a formal means of keeping a record of the times of star-rise and star-set through the seasonal year. Its invention is reasonably connected with the names of two men, Meton and Euctemon, who are otherwise known for their work in what we would recognize today as strict astronomy.[4]

As it has survived archaeologically, the star-based parapegma in its developed form consists of inscribed stone tablets; wood also may have been used, but has not survived. Fragmentary examples have been discovered across the Mediterranean, from Athens itself (one from the late fourth century B.C.E.), Miletos in the east (two of the turn of the second-to-first century B.C.E.), and Pozzuoli in the west. Such inscriptions are arrayed in a number of columns on the stone slabs; a peg would be moved manually from one day to the next through the year, through a series of 365 holes, alongside some of which are chiseled the stellar observations for the day; days lacking observations are marked simply by empty peg-holes, set one after another in a line if necessary.[5] Of the two specimens from Miletos,

[4] A. C. Bowen and B. R. Goldstein, "Meton of Athens and Astronomy in the Late Fifth Century B.C.," in *A Scientific Humanist: Studies in Memory of Abraham Sachs,* ed. E. Leichty, M. de J. Ellis and P. Gerardi (Philadelphia, 1988), 39–51; B. L. van der Waerden, *Die Astronomie der Griechen: eine Einführung* (Darmstadt, 1988), 79–86; D. R. Dicks, "Euktemon," in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, vol. 4, ed. Charles Coulston Gillispie (New York, 1971), 459–60; D. R. Dicks, *Early Greek Astronomy to Aristotle* (New York, 1970), 87–88.

[5] On the Milesian parapegmas (now Berlin, Staatliche Museen SK 1606 [MI and MII]), see H. Diels and A. Rehm, "Parapegmafragmente aus Milet," *Sitzungsberichte der koeniglich preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philos.-histor. Cl.* 23 (1904): 92–111, Tafel II; H. Diels, *Antike Technik* (Leipzig, 1914), Tafel I; R. Hannah, "The Star Calendar of Euktemon: the Road to a Solar Calendar," in *Science in Ancient Greece*, ed. C. Tuplin and N. Fox (Oxford, forthcoming). In this context, I am very grateful to Dr Liba Taub for a pre-publication copy of her paper, "Astrometeorology in Antiquity: Tradition and Prediction".

On parapegmas in general, see: G. Schiaparelli, *Scritti sulla Storia della Astronomia Antica*, vol. 1, pt. 2 (Bologna, 1926), 235–85; A. Rehm, *Parapegmastudien* (Munich, 1941); A. Rehm, "Parapegma," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft,* ed. G. Wissowa, vol. 18, pt. 4 (Stuttgart, 1949), 1295–1366; O. Neugebauer, *A History of Ancient Mathematical Astronomy*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1975), 587–89; van der Waerden, *Die Astronomie der Griechen*, 76–79; J. Evans, *The History and Practice of Ancient Astronomy* (New York, 1998), 199–204.

the slightly earlier one is a relatively simple form of the parapegma (albeit with a large number of stellar observations), insofar as it hardly refers to weather forecasts, and not at all to its sources. But even this type of parapegma must originally have been visually imposing in its scale. The best preserved "month" on it—when the sun passes through the sign of Aquarius—occupies twenty-three lines itself and provides what may be regarded as a typical example of a basic parapegma (the "bullet-points" here indicating peg-holes in the original):

• ἐν ὑδροχόωι ὁ ἥλιος
• [λέων] ἑῷιος ἄρχεται δύνων
  καὶ λύρα δύνει
  • •
• ὄρνις ἀκρόνυχος ἄρχεται δύνων
  • • • • • • • • •
• ἀνδρομέδα ἄρχεται ἑώια ἐπι-
  τέλλειν
  • •
• ὑδροχόος μεσοῖ ἀνατέλλων
• ἵππος ἑῷιος ἄρχεται ἐπι-
  τέλλειν
  •
• κένταυρος ὅλος ἑῷιος δύνει
• ὕδρος ὅλος ἑῷιος δύνει
• κῆτος ἄρχεται ἀκρόνυχον
  δύνειν
• οἰστὸς δύνει, ζεφύρων ὥ-
  ρα συνεχῶν
  • • • •
• ὄρνις ὅλος ἀκρόνυχος δύνει
• [ἀρκτοῦρος] ἀκρόνυχος ἐπι-
  [τέλλει]

• The Sun in the Water-Pourer (= Aquarius)
• [The Lion] (= Leo) begins setting in the morning and the Lyre (= Lyra) sets
  • •

A partial star-calendar survives on the geared device discovered on a shipwreck off Antikythera, but its poor state of preservation still prevents a clear understanding of the purpose of the device as a whole and of the calendar on it; see D. de Solla Price, "Gears from the Greeks: the Antikythera Mechanism, a Calendar Computer from ca. 80 B.C.," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 64, pt. 7 (1974): especially 46–49; A. G. Bromley, "Notes on the Antikythera Mechanism," *Centaurus*, 29 (1986): 5–27 (at 23, it is suggested that the calendar might mark "significant days in the months of some religious or civil lunar calendar").

- The Bird (= Cygnus) begins setting at nightfall
  • • • • • • • • • •
- Andromeda begins to rise at dawn
  • •
- The Water-Pourer (= Aquarius) is in the middle of its rising
- The Horse (= Pegasus) begins to rise in the morning
  •
- The whole Centaur (= Centaurus) sets in the morning
- The whole Hydra (= Hydra) sets in the morning
- The Great Sea-monster (= Cetus) begins to set in the evening
- The Arrow sets, a season of continuous west winds
  • • • •
- The whole Bird (= Cygnus) sets in the evening
- [Arktouros (= Arcturus) rises] in the evening

Of Meton's and Euctemon's original parapegmas nothing survives archaeologically (assuming they took the form of inscribed stones), and evidence for Meton's in later literature is scanty.[6] But for Euctemon's we have a good deal of evidence from later literature and inscriptions (it is referred to explicitly in the second, slightly later parapegma from Miletos), for it was one of the most popular calendars used in later periods. Euctemon's parapegma in fact survives organized in three ways, with the star-sightings arranged according to day-counts, or to the twelve signs of the zodiac, or to a civil calendar, as the following samples for the same time of year illustrate:

(a) A single manuscript in Vienna, of the fifteenth century, uses the day-count method of organizing the observations. The stars named and the vocabulary employed for their phases suggest that the text is a reflection of Euctemon's parapegma.

ἀπὸ ʼΑετοῦ δύσεως εἰς Κύνα ἡμέραι δʹ.
ἐτησίαι ἄνεμοι ἄρχονται πνεῖν.
ἀπὸ Κυνὸς ἐκφανείας εἰς Λύρας δύσιν καὶ Ἵππου ἐπιτολὴν ἡμέραι ιγʹ.
ἀπὸ Λύρας δύσεως καὶ Ἵππου ἐπιτολῆς εἰς Προτρυγητοῦ ἐκφάνειαν καὶ ʼΑρκτούρου ἐπιτολὴν καὶ †ʼΟιστοῦ δύσιν [ἡμέραι . . .]

From the setting of the Eagle (= Aquila) to [the appearance of] the Dog (= Sirius) 4 days. The Etesian winds begin to blow.
From the appearance of the Dog (= Sirius) to the setting of the Lyre (= Lyra) and the rising of the Horse (= Pegasus) 13 days.
From the setting of the Lyre (= Lyra) and the rising of the Horse (= Pegasus) to the appearance of Protrygeter (= Vindemiatrix?) and

[6] Rehm, "Parapegma," 1340–41; van der Waerden, *Die Astronomie der Griechen*, 85–86; Bowen and Goldstein, "Meton of Athens," 52–53.

the rising of Arcturus and the setting of † the Arrow (= Sagitta) [*x* days].

(cod. Vind. Gr. philos. 108, fol. 282v)

(b) Attached to the *Introduction to the Phenomena* of Geminus (mid-first century C.E.) is a collection of parapegmas, within which Euctemon's is quoted forty-seven times. This compilation organizes the parapegmas according to the twelve signs of the zodiac.

Τὸν δὲ Λέοντα διαπορεύεται ὁ ἥλιος ἐν ἡμέραις λα΄.
Ἐν μὲν οὖν τῇ α$^{\eta}$ ἡμέρᾳ Εὐκτήμονι Κύων μὲν ἐκφανής, πνῖγος δὲ ἐπιγίνεται· ἐπισημαίνει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ε$^{\eta}$ Εὐδόξῳ Ἀετὸς ἑῷος δύνει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ι$^{\eta}$ ἡμέρᾳ Εὐδόξῳ Στέφανος δύνει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ιβ$^{\eta}$ Καλλίππῳ Λέων μέσος ἀνατέλλων πνίγη μάλιστα ποιεῖ.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ιδ$^{\eta}$ Εὐκτήμονι πνίγη μάλιστα γίνεται.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ις$^{\eta}$ ἡμέρᾳ Εὐδόξῳ ἐπισημαίνει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ιζ$^{\eta}$ Εὐκτήμονι Λύρα δύεται· καὶ ἔτι ὕει· καὶ ἐτησίαι παύονται· καὶ Ἵππος ἐπιτέλλει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ ιη$^{\eta}$ Εὐδόξῳ Δελφὶς ἑῷος δύνει. Δοσιθέῳ Προτρυγητὴρ ἀκρόνυχος ἐπιτέλλει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ κβ$^{\eta}$ Εὐδόξῳ Λύρα ἑῷος δύνει· ἐπισημαίνει.
Ἐν δὲ τῇ κθ$^{\eta}$ Εὐδόξῳ ἐπισημαίνει. Καλλίππῳ Παρθένος ἐπιτέλλει· ἐπισημαίνει.

The sun passes through the Lion (= Leo) in 31 days.
On the 1st day, according to Euctemon, the Dog (= Sirius) is visible, and the stifling heat begins; signs of weather.
On the 5th, according to Eudoxus, the Eagle (= Aquila) sets at dawn.
On the 10th, according to Eudoxus, the Crown (= Corona) sets.
On the 12th, according to Callippus, the Lion (= Leo), half rising, makes a very strong heat.
On the 14th, according to Euctemon, the heat is at its greatest.
On the 16th, according to Eudoxus, signs of weather.
On the 17th, according to Euctemon, the Lyre (= Lyra) sets; and it also rains; and the Etesian winds stop; and the Horse (= Pegasus) rises.
On the 18th, according to Eudoxus, the Dolphin (= Delphinus) sets at dawn. According to Dositheus, Protrygeter (= Vindemiatrix?) rises at nightfall.
On the 22d, according to Eudoxus, the Lyre (= Lyra) sets at dawn; signs of weather.
On the 29th, according to Eudoxus, signs of weather. According to Callippus, the Maiden (= Virgo) rises; signs of weather.

(Parapegma attached to Geminus, *Introduction to the Phenomena*)

(c) Another compilation of parapegmas is given by Ptolemy from the second century C.E. in his *Phases of the Fixed Stars*. Ptolemy structured the observations for each day around the days of the civil calendar of Alexandria.

> ΜΕΣΟΡΙ
> . . . γ′. Εὐκτήμονι καὶ Δοσιθέῳ νοτία καὶ πνίγη.
>
> In the month of Mesori.
> . . . On the 3rd day, according to Euctemon and Dositheus, rain and stifling heat.
>
> (Ptolemy, *Phases of the Fixed Stars*)[7]

It is generally accepted that Euctemon structured his calendar from the very start around a system of zodiacal "months." However, on the basis of the available evidence, it appears to me to be most likely that he initially used only the age-old method of day-counts between his sightings, as demonstrated in the Vienna manuscript above. At some later stage this parapegma was organized according to the zodiacal "months," in a manner similar to (although not perhaps exactly as in) the collection associated with Geminus. That both systems of organization were the work of Euctemon himself is suggested by the very stars in the two versions: later, securely attributed parapegmas prune his number of stars, even though they may increase the number of observations.[8]

II. *From Oral To Literate*

What I would like to do in this second half of my chapter is to examine some questions regarding Euctemon's parapegma, from the standpoint of our particular interest in the roles of orality and literacy in Athenian society.

(1) Was the production of Euctemon's parapegma dependant upon literacy?
(2) Was it intended for a public context? What was its purpose? Who were the intended recipients/readers?

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[7] (a) Day-counts: cod. Vind. Gr. philos. 108, fol. 282v, 283r; published by A. Rehm, *Das Parapegma des Euktemon*, Griechische Kalender, vol. 3 (Heidelberg, 1913), 14–26.
(b) Zodiacal signs: G. Aujac, ed., *Geminos* (Paris, 1975), 98–108.
(c) Civil calendars: J. L. Heiberg, ed., *Claudii Ptolemaei Opera Quae Supersunt*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1907), 1–67 (using the calendar of Alexandria); Pliny, *Natural History*, Book 18 (using the Julian calendar).

[8] This complex case is argued fully in Hannah, "The Star Calendar of Euktemon." For the traditional view, see Rehm, *Das Parapegma des Euktemon*, 4–11; Bowen and Goldstein, "Meton of Athens," 53–54, especially n. 75.

Was the production of Euctemon's parapegma dependant upon literacy?

Between Hesiod's farmer's calendar and Euctemon's parapegma, there is a shift in the mode of communication. Firstly, whereas Hesiod used hexameter verse, Euctemon's observations have survived only in perfunctory prose: the quotations (if that is what they are) are not obviously metrical, the diction is not exclusively poetic and lacks ornamentation, and the vocabulary is very limited and basic. What does this difference signify? If, as Eric Havelock thought, verse served as an aid to memorization, it would appear that Euctemon is eschewing the traditional means of memorizing his information.[9] Is this a sign of Euctemon's originally composing his parapegma in literate form? It is arguable that while Hesiod composed within a largely oral tradition (whether or not his poem was written down in his own time), the testimony regarding Euctemon's parapegma does indeed suggest that his work was initially written down and was passed on to others in that form. Firstly, we know that Meton set up in Athens *stelai* to record in some way his establishment of the solstices.[10] It may be that these *stelai* are a reference to his parapegma, set up in the city itself.[11] Secondly, that Meton and Euctemon in some sense published their parapegmas is clear from the explicit and extensive use of their observations in the later tradition. Such a "publication" need not be in such a literary form as a papyrus roll "book," as has sometimes been supposed but without clear ancient authority, so much as in the form of a public inscription.[12] A scholiast to Aratus tells us that Meton's "followers set up in the cities tablets (*pinakes*)

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[9] E. A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton, 1982), 115–21.

[10] Aelian, *Varia Historia* 10.7.

[11] See Bowen and Goldstein, "Meton of Athens," 53 n. 67 for an exposition of modern interpretations of what Aelian meant, and 73–77 for their (convincing) view that Meton was seeking to fix the alignment of the solstices rather than their actual date of occurrence, which, they argue, he knew already from the Babylonians.

[12] Contrast the positions taken on the existence or otherwise of a "book" on the calendar by Meton in, on the one hand, E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.* (London, 1951), 18 (accepts a technical manual by Meton, *On the Calendar*)—still repeated by W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 81–82, and D. Nails, *Agora, Academy, and the Conduct of Philosophy* (Dordrecht, 1995), 171—and, on the other hand, Rehm, *Parapegmastudien*, 8 (Meton published not a book, but an inscription). The existence of συγγράμματα (writings) by astronomers and others ostensibly in Socrates' time is vouched for by Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.2.9–10; cf. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 5th ed. (Darmstadt, 1954), vol. 4:1, 840; Nails, *Agora*, 171 n. 32.

dealing with the nineteen year cycles of the sun, reckoning that in each year this [time] will be winter, and this summer, and this late autumn, and this the winds, and many other things suitable to what men need in life."[13] These sound like large-scale parapegmas, this time tied to Meton's nineteen-year cycle for correlating the moon's and the sun's motions, and so covering a much longer period than a single solar year. The provenance of the fragment of a fourth century B.C.E. parapegma discovered in Athens is suggestive of such a process of publication: it came from the area of the Pompeion in the Kerameikos, that is, the public assembly place for processions.[14] Therefore, we may argue that Euctemon did publish his parapegma in written form from the start, and did so in prose form, but probably not as a treatise or essay, rather as an inscription.

A second change in the mode of communication lies in the fact that Hesiod set his brief observations of star and sun positions within a much longer poem about the farmer's lot in general. Euctemon, on the other hand, appears to have presented nothing more than a terse list of observations, to judge from the various quotations of his parapegma. Of course, it is quite possible that Hesiod's observations were culled from some more comprehensive catalogue of star-phases,[15] but even that catalogue is more likely to have been expressed in verse than in prose. Euctemon's parapegma necessarily arranged its observations in a list format, stripped, it seems, to the bare essentials.

Jack Goody has argued that writing serves two principal functions: to store information, and to facilitate the process of reorganizing information.[16] Writing, he states, insists upon "a visual, spatial location which then becomes subject to possible rearrangement."[17] A particularly common form of preserved early writing, he points out, is the list, which permits both of the functions of storage and reorganization,

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[13] J. Martin, *Scholia in Aratum Vetera* (Stuttgart, 1974), 381.

[14] On the Pompeion, see J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (London, 1971), 477–81; U. Knigge, *The Athenian Kerameikos* (Athens, 1991), 79–82.

[15] As Reiche, "Fail-safe Stellar Dating," 45, assumes. Fragments do survive of a poem by Hesiod, the *Astronomy*, which dealt with the risings and settings of the principal stars, and perhaps the myths associated with them: M. L. West, *Hesiod* Works and Days (Oxford, 1978), 23.

[16] J. Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge, 1977), 78. Cf. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 66–93, who discusses the actual uses that writing was put to in classical Athens, under the four headings identified by Aristotle: moneymaking, household management, learning things and civic affairs.

[17] Goody, *Domestication*, 104.

and at the same time necessarily imposes a spatial arrangement of words which is left open to rearrangement.[18] A list is a means of classification, made explicit, Goody would say, by writing, "and possibly only by writing."[19] Three types of list are common: the retrospective inventory of persons, objects or events; the prospective plan, such as an itinerary; and the lexical list.[20] These types of list, he believed, process information in a way that is usually quite distinct from ordinary speech: they do not represent speech directly, but rather reflect a mode of thought, or a cognitive operation, that differs from that of speech, insofar as they treat verbal items in a disconnected and abstract way; they may have no oral equivalent at all.[21] A list permits the organization, and reorganization, of information which is received at various times and places, for instance, a religious calendar of sacrifices to the gods through the year. Such a list not only provides a record of an activity at a particular time, but also establishes a more formalized way of conceiving that activity.[22] The activity becomes "decontextualized,"[23] set apart from its particular context in time and space, and instead is placed into another context in which it may gain other significances as it is juxtaposed beside other activities or other classes of events. As Goody points out, the recording in Mesopotamia of natural phenomena often took the form of lists of "decontextualized" observations, which were translated into precise numerical terms, and then used to pose the questions that led to the development of both mathematics and astrology.[24]

To quote Goody's summary of his theory:

> Lists are seen to be characteristic of the early uses of writing, being promoted partly by the demands of complex economic and state organisation, partly by the nature of scribal training, and partly by a "play" element, which attempts to explore the potentialities of this new medium. They represent an activity which is difficult in oral cultures and one which encourages the activities of historians and the observational sciences, as well as on a more general level, favouring the exploration and definition of classificatory schemas.[25]

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[18] Goody, *Domestication*, 80.
[19] Goody, *Domestication*, 105.
[20] Goody, *Domestication*, 80.
[21] Goody, *Domestication*, 81, 86.
[22] Goody, *Domestication*, 87, 88.
[23] The term is introduced, with some caution, by Goody, *Domestication*, 78.
[24] Goody, *Domestication*, 92–93.
[25] Goody, *Domestication*, 108.

On this basis, the parapegma, we may then argue, fulfils well both primary functions identified by Goody, in that it preserves information about observations of the stars from different times of the year, and then permits one to reorganize this information according to various criteria. The collection of parapegmas attached to the work of Geminus, that compiled by Pliny, and that collected by Ptolemy, all illustrate this facility at its most sophisticated level, for they collate into one list the various parapegmas of earlier authors, arrange them according to different criteria (the zodiac or the civil calendar), and permit, for instance, the observation that the same stellar phase can be observed at different times of the month according to one's geographical situation (latitude).

But, it may be countered, Euctemon's parapegma is at a simpler level than these later calendars. Indeed, it is no different in purpose from, say, Homer's Catalogue of Ships in the *Iliad*, in which the poet enumerates the Greek and Trojan forces at Troy in a formulaic manner. One could postulate some similar orally composed "Catalogue of Stars" as lying behind Hesiod's farmer's calendar (his own poem, the *Astronomy*, perhaps reflective of such), and, furthermore, assume its existence down to Euctemon's time, when it could have formed the basis of his own parapegma. In other words, the very act of list-making is not the preserve of the literate alone. Oral societies were perfectly capable of creating lists which incorporated variable numerical values, as the Catalogue of Ships does, and as star-calendars arguably could too.[26] So, to this extent, Goody overstates his case for list-making as a peculiarly literate activity.

But in another respect I think he may be correct. This is in the area of the manipulation of a list's data and the development of ideas from that very act. Euctemon himself, let us recall, appears to have altered the organizational basis of his list of star observations, from a schema relying on day-counts, to a schema structured around the zodiacal months (the latter form being generally accepted as his own invention). In so doing, he tied the star observations directly to the apparent/observed motion of the sun.[27] From this point on, the

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[26] For the complexity of list poems, compare E. Jackson, "'Not Simply Lists': an Eddic Perspective on Short-Item Lists in Old English poems," *Speculum* 73 (1998): 338–371.

[27] Or, rather, he tied together the motion of the sun through the zodiacal band of stars, and the expanded body of star observations within and outside that band.

Greeks concentrate their efforts not so much on refining the star observations (although some minor work does take place there), as on further defining the solar year, and so establishing the foundations for what will become the Julian calendar.

At a deeper level, we have seen, Goody argued for a position in which writing, and list-making in particular, provided the impetus for intellectual reflection on information. It is for him a facilitator of cognitive growth.[28] Geoffrey Lloyd takes a somewhat more circumspect stance on this issue. While acknowledging a role for literacy in the spread of critical thought in the classical Greek world and in the development of certain types of question, Lloyd prefers to see the spoken word, rather than the written, as the principal means of communicating ideas and of scrutinizing those ideas.[29] Ruth Finnegan has taken a similar stance, on the one hand acknowledging a role for literacy in the development of science because of the accumulation of many more written records over generations than a pre-literate individual can maintain, while on the other hand arguing that literacy in itself is not a precondition for abstract thought, and emphasizing the oral aspect of Greek literacy, i.e. written words were (normally) read aloud not silently.[30] Goody, however, has reiterated his position, arguing explicitly in the case of astronomy that advances made in this field depended on reliable observations using appropriate instruments of observation, and the preservation of those observations through writing.[31] Skeptical scrutiny of observations and omens, he asserts, while not unusual in oral societies, is much easier in a written context, where it may lead to the development of "a critical tradition that rejects 'magic' side by side with a more

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In other words, he married the Babylonian and Greek traditions. We can only guess why he did this, but we do know from different sources that Euctemon was, or became, interested in establishing the points in the year when the sun's motion, and hence the seasons, change, i.e. the solstices and equinoxes. It is possible to postulate an Eastern, specifically Babylonian, influence attracting Euctemon down this line of enquiry, as both written star-calendars organized into twelve artificial months and datings of the solstices already existed there.

[28] Goody, *Domestication*, 108–11.

[29] G. E. R. Lloyd, *Magic, Reason and Experience* (Cambridge, 1979), 98, 239–40, and 266.

[30] R. Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality* (Oxford, 1988), 56–57, 146–47. On silent and vocal reading, see B. M. W. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 9 (1968): 421–35 (I am grateful to the anonymous reader for this reference).

[31] J. Goody, *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (Cambridge, 1986), 78.

orally based one that accepts it," and the germs of such a critical approach, he believes, are already visible in the written records of Mesopotamia.[32] Even Debra Nails, who argues forcefully against the view "that literacy is a necessary condition for abstraction . . . or the statement of analytical or mathematical relationships," cannot seem to do without the requirement for records of observations, whether they are put down in alphabetic or other (logographic) form.[33] And when she quotes Harris, to the effect that we should not "underestimate the ability of the illiterate to list things and to remember lists", so as to support her assertion that writing is not a necessary condition for organizing large numbers of past, present and future entities,[34] she ignores the question of what pre-literate and literate people do with lists. In terms of cognitive skills, the ability to construct and then to recall a list—as poets close to pre-literate Greece did—is at a lower level than constructing, recalling, reflecting on, checking and adjusting the contents of a given list, which is what astronomers in a literate classical Greece did.[35]

Goody's fundamental point remains, I think, as far as this research into the parapegma is concerned: written lists of stellar observations appear to have encouraged a type of thinking, whereby the observations were decontextualized from their place in a specific part of the agricultural year and repositioned in a list which emphasized instead their place in the annual progression of celestial events. Further replication and reflection opened up avenues of thought that oral approaches to the same data do not seem to have encouraged.

Was Euctemon's parapegma intended for a public context? What was its purpose? Who were the intended recipients/readers?

Euctemon's parapegma seems to have no immediate broader context: what it says appears to be all that was intended. Let us consider its purpose.

Euctemon's parapegma would stand in stark contrast with other

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[32] Goody, *The Logic of Writing*, 37.
[33] Nails, *Agora*, 181 and n. 7.
[34] Nails, *Agora*, 186 and n. 14; Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 33.
[35] See, for a parallel instance, L. Edmonds, "Thucydides in the Act of Writing," in *Tradizione e Innovazione nella Cultura greca da Omero all' Età ellenistica: Scritti in Onore di Bruno Gentili*, ed. R. Pretagostini, vol. 2 (Rome, 1993), 833, on the new possibilities of analysis and discourse opened up for Thucydides by writing and reading.

types of calendars then in use in Athens and elsewhere in the Greek world, which were easily put out of step with the seasons. Athens possessed a political and a religious calendar. The religious calendar was perhaps moon-based in origin, but had become corrupted by apparently irregular intercalations and suppressions of days; the political calendar was tied to neither moon nor sun, nor did it coincide with the religious calendar. By the late fifth century B.C.E. the religious calendar appears to have been seriously out of tune with lunar phases, even though its days and months were derived from those phases; religious observances, it seems, were no longer carried out at the proper time according to the moon.[36] In this context, Euctemon's calendar in its zodiac-based format is particularly interesting. For the creation of artificial twelfths of the year suggests a desire to establish a regularity in the division of the solar/seasonal year, which stands in contrast to the innate mobility and irregularity of a lunar-based calendar.

The length of the solar year was important to maintain regularity from one year to the next, so that religious festivals, which were centered on agricultural events such as sowing and harvesting, could be held at the appropriate, seasonal time. Whereas Hesiod's calendar ties stellar phenomena to agricultural activities, Euctemon's ties them, if to anything, apparently only to meteorological phenomena. Agricultural and maritime activities could be run by it, but they are not explicitly stated, and a parapegma set up in a city is of little immediate use to either farmers or sailors. The absence of an overtly stated practical purpose gives Euctemon's calendar the appearance of a disinterested, "scientific" construct, created for its own intrinsic interest. This "scientific" character of the parapegma of Euctemon, and its presumed solar character, in fact led Pritchett and van der Waerden to argue that it would have attracted Thucydides, who wanted a more reliable system of time measurement than the civil calendars of his time could offer, to use it for his reporting of events in the Peloponnesian War.[37] But we may question whether Euctemon's

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[36] Aristophanes, *Nu.* 615–26.

[37] W. K. Pritchett and B. L. van der Waerden, "Thucydidean Time-Reckoning and Euktemon's Seasonal Calendar," *Bulletin de Correspondance Héllenique* 85 (1961): 17–52. This view was strongly disputed by B. D. Meritt, "The Seasons in Thucydides," *Historia* 11 (1962): 436–46, and more recently by O. Wenskus, *Astronomische Zeitangaben von Homer bis Theophrast* (Stuttgart, 1990), 87–89.

Compare E. Flores, "Annali e Astronomia: alle Origini della Storiografia greca,"

calendar was necessarily the piece of disinterested scientific research that some modern scholars would have it be. The very choice of stars in the calendar would seem to argue against this interpretation. The traditional core of observed stars within and outside the zodiacal belt has been extended by far more from outside the belt than from within it. This would suggest that a calendar with the principal purpose of keeping track of the sun's apparent movement in the sky was not Euctemon's original intention, since one might expect that a list of stars which were more closely connected with the sun would have been included, as indeed Callippus did a century later with his parapegma.

Later stone parapegmas have been found within cities. The Athenian fragment, for instance, came from the area of the Pompeion in the Kerameikos. Such a context indicates that the inscription was meant to be seen by the public. Admittedly, it does not mean that everyone was expected or able to read it. But, like other public documents in the Athenian democracy, the parapegma at the very least could have served the purpose of monumentalizing an idea that the state wished to be made public.[38] Even if only a few could read it and then understand it, nevertheless the intention would seem to have been that the parapegma should have at least a visual impact on more than just an élite, literate few. In this case, the parapegma can be contrasted with examples of astronomical records from other cultures, such as Mesopotamia or the Pacific Islands, where the data were collected and retained, in either literate or oral form, by a small band of initiates, whose responsibility it was then to interpret the observations for an audience, whether as omens for the court in Mesopotamia or as directions for a journey across the seas in the Pacific Islands.[39]

What was this idea which the parapegma monumentalized? It may, in fact, be argued that others than actual farmers further down the agricultural chain, who still relied on the seasonal cycle but less

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in *Tradizione e Innovazione*, ed. Pretagostini, 773–83, on the uses of eclipses in annalistic historiography as a means of keeping tabs on time.

[38] R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 50–53; R. Thomas, "Literacy and the City-State in Archaic and Classical Greece," in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, eds. A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf (Cambridge, 1994), 33–50, especially 37–40.

[39] For Mesopotamian records, see Goody, *Domestication*, 93; for Pacific Islanders' navigational skills using memorized astronomical data, see D. Lewis, *We, the Navigators: the Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific*, 2d ed. (Honolulu, 1994).

directly as a basis for their own activities, could have used and even commissioned the calendar to regulate those activities.[40] These "others" would seem to have to be the religious authorities who wanted to keep the festivals of the gods in time with the agricultural seasons to which the cults were attached. As Pritchett and van der Waerden have argued:

> It is clear that the parapegmata were composed by scientists, but meant for general use in the towns. The parapegma established a correspondence between two kinds of calendars: the seasonal or sidereal calendar and the civil or modified lunar calendar. The seasonal calendar was most important for such persons as peasants and ship-owners, whereas the civil calendar governed the festivals and the town life.[41]

Furthermore, as Osborne has noted:

> The agricultural year shapes the religious year, both because the farmer's activities were themselves of vital importance and because they provided a paradigm for the understanding of other aspects of human life. The annual pattern of sowing, cultivation, and harvest provided a framework for the understanding of events of long or uncertain periodicity. The life of the farm provided a model of growth, change, maturity and death; human birth, development, labour and death could be thought about using that model, and because of the regularity of crop development the uncertain human events could be seen to be part of a larger pattern. Farming directly provided livelihood and sustenance for the majority of Greeks. It also provided a way of ordering their lives.[42]

We could go further still, and suggest that the dramatic increase in the number of observations, which Euctemon's parapegma provides over the earlier list in Hesiod's poem, might be due to a desire to tie definite agricultural festivals more closely to their proper time of year. In that case, perhaps some of the observed stars added by Euctemon have particular significance for some festivals or the gods associated with those festivals. A preliminary study suggests that this

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[40] Cf. Reiche, "Fail-safe Stellar Dating," 43: "When Meton finally inserts stellar phases into the radically improved lunisolar cycle that bears his name, the calendric needs of farmers at last came into their own, albeit in a form inaccessible to all but a literate minority." And Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 67–68: "There is . . . not the slightest reason to suppose that the ordinary Greek farmer made use of writing."

[41] Pritchett and van der Waerden, "Thucydidean Time-Reckoning," 40.

[42] R. Osborne, *Classical Landscape with Figures: the Ancient Greek City and its Countryside* (London, 1987), 174.

may well be the case with festivals of Demeter and Persephone, the timing of which seems to coincide with significant observations (risings, settings or transits) of the Pleiades, the Hyades, Orion and the Bear. And the major festival of Athens' patron deity, Athena, might have been intended to coincide with significant observed positions of the constellation of the Horse (Pegasus), an appropriate companion to the goddess. While work in this area is too much in its infancy to warrant detailed discussion here, it is of interest to note that later periods of history certainly witnessed the use of star-calendars for religious purposes.[43]

It has been suggested that Euctemon's calendar might have lent itself to even more manipulative effect in the political sphere. The calendar's ability to offer a more regular progression within the year and from one year to the next might have been extremely attractive to the political leaders of Athens in the later fifth century, as the city tried to increase its control over its allies through centralized cults and festivals.[44] The Eleusinian Mysteries and the Panathenaia are obvious examples of such festivals which were further developed at this time to increase the bond between Athens and her allies.[45]

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[43] Compare the later festival calendar (of about 300 B.C.E.) preserved in the Hibeh Papyri, which depends in some way on the parapegma of Eudoxus while meshing it with an Egyptian lunar-based calendar, and incorporates indications for the celebration of certain Egyptian religious festivals: *The Hibeh Papyri*, ed. B. P. Grenfell and A. S. Hunt, pt. 1 (London, 1906), 138–57; F. Lasserre, *Die Fragmente des Eudoxos von Knidos* (Berlin, 1966), 214–19; A. Spalinger, "Remarks on an Egyptian Feast Calendar of Foreign Origin," *Studien zur altägyptischen Kultur* 18 (1991): 349–73; Evans, *History and Practice*, 201–3.

In the early medieval period, Gregory of Tours provided stellar observational data (of ultimately classical origin) for monks so that they could regulate their timing of night prayer: see S. C. McCluskey, *Astronomies and Cultures in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1998), 97–113.

[44] B. Fehr, "Zur religionspolitischen Funktion der Athena Parthenos im Rahmen des delisch-athenischen Seebundes—Teil II," *Hephaistos* 2 (1980): 113–25.

[45] Compare Goody, *The Logic of Writing*, 95 on political control through the calendar; Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 75 broaches the question of the degree of control Athens exercised over her allies through writing; R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992), 148 and R. Thomas, "Literacy and the City-State," 43–45, emphasize the use by Athens of inscribed decrees to intimidate rather than just inform her allies. Note also Augustus' later use of the calendar as an instrument of political control: A. Wallace-Hadrill, "Time for Augustus: Ovid, Augustus and the Fasti," in *Homo Viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. M. Whitby, P. Hardie and M. Whitby (Bristol, 1987), 221–30; A. Wallace-Hadrill, "Mutatio Morum: the Idea of a Cultural Revolution," in *The Roman Cultural Revolution*, ed. T. Habinek and A. Schiesaro (Cambridge, 1997), 16–18. For a modern cross-cultural parallel, see A. Gell, *The Anthropology of Time* (Oxford, 1992), 306–13.

More recently, Dunn has suggested that the Athenian Council's own administrative calendar of ten prytanies per year was revised in the late fifth century to fit into a solar calendar of 365/6 days rather than into the traditional lunar calendar of twelve or thirteen months (giving 354 or 384 days to a year), under the influence of Euctemon's parapegma.[46]

But thoughts of such political manipulation should be balanced by awareness of more mundane uses of the parapegmas. There are, for example, the explicit and frequent references in the parapegma of Euctemon, and other such calendars, to weather prognostications (*episemasiai*). We may ask to what extent these were part of the very raison d'être of the parapegmas. One may note, for instance, the later agricultural calendar of Columella, which explicitly assumes a causal connection between the stars and the weather, and so times agricultural activities according to the weather which is produced by the stars.[47] This belief needs to be studied further, particularly with regard to its origins. And there are further social and civic ramifications to the use of star-based weather forecasts: it has already been pointed out by Bowen and Goldstein that both the meteorological prognostications and the interest in the solstices evinced by the parapegmas may well be related to contemporary developments in medicine and town-planning, both of which showed an interest in the relationship between health and the seasons.[48]

One result of this research is to suggest that Euctemon's development of the seasonal calendar was not due to disinterested "scientific" interest, i.e. knowledge for knowledge's sake. Rather, he was probably driven by external socio-political forces and needs. A further result is the argument that the accumulation of stellar observations for everyday agricultural or nautical purposes is not dependant upon the acquisition of writing, since pre-literate Greek societies engaged in such activity. Nevertheless, it does appear to be the case that writing enabled the Greeks to realize that they could separate those

[46] F. M. Dunn, "The Uses of Time in Fifth-century Athens," *The Ancient World* 29:1 (1998): 37–52; I am grateful to my wife, Pat, for this reference.

[47] Columella 11.1.32, and 11.2.1–98 passim.

[48] Bowen and Goldstein, "Meton of Athens," 73–77; see also A. Rehm, "Episemasiai," in *Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. G. Wissowa, Supplement 7 (Stuttgart, 1940), 175–97; Wenskus, *Astronomische Zeitangaben*, 31–32.

observations from their original context and place them in other quite abstract contexts, in other words in lists, which in turn enabled them to discover more precise temporal relationships between those phenomena and the cycle of the larger celestial body of the sun, and indeed to understand the cycle of the sun much better.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ΤΟΝ ΑΘΕΝΕΘΕΝ ΑΘΛΟΝ
A CASE STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF A LABEL

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This chapter is not concerned with a piece of ancient literature, something from the cultural heights of Homer or Euripides, Thucydides or Plato. It relates, instead, to another world, the world of commerce and marketing, one associated more today with products like Coke, or more precisely empty, lidless Coca-Cola containers. Even in their discarded state these items are instantly recognizable, especially for the younger generation, whether it be as a glass bottle, a special reproduction of earlier bottles, a similar plastic version (small, large, or family size) or even reformatted into a cylindrical can. The manufacturers and their advertisers have ensured that, almost everywhere in the world, their drink will be known and easily distinguished from its competitors. Not only is it the special shape, the colors (both the black-brown drink itself and the red-and-white wrapping), and, until recently, the "dynamic ribbon device," but also, of course, the Coca-Cola name in its characteristic writing which attracts the attention of the prospective customer across the supermarket or café shelves. All of these are protected by modern copyright and trademark legislation, and, whether one speaks or reads English well or not, if one wants a Coke, there is no problem in identifying "the real thing." Such I would like to suggest was the impact in the archaic, classical and Hellenistic periods of the Athenian vases which form the focus of this chapter.

1. *The Vases*

For approximately four hundred years at the quadrennial Panathenaic Games at Athens, the victors in the equestrian and athletic events each received a sizable quantity of valuable Athenian olive oil as their prize. This was awarded (one might say delivered) in a number

of huge, terracotta, black-figure amphoras.[1] Since these are impressive and instantly recognizable containers, one may reasonably deduce that the packaging itself was important. Together the shape, the size, and the decoration create a lasting and unmistakable image, one which was both a symbol of the victory won and a guarantee for the high quality of the oil inside.

All Panathenaic prize-vases have narrow mouths and necks, bulging bodies, and small feet, although they followed the trend to even taller and slimmer proportions in the fourth century B.C.E.[2] Since the capacity of the vase is always roughly uniform, on average about 38–39 l or 36 kg of oil, the height (without the lid) is usually between 59 and 69 cm or 62 and 82 cm in the fourth century. Most sixth and fifth century examples are about 62–64 cm.[3]

The front panel on the body features an armed Athena in an aggressive pose, though no opponent is ever included. Instead, from ca. 540 she is framed by Doric columns on which stand roosters. Apart from the replacement of the roosters with various figures in the first decade of the fourth century and Athena's turning to our right ca. 360, this pictorial image remained fairly constant and archaizing. The draftsmanship of the reverse panel, however, which portrayed some aspect of the games, usually a contest for which oil was the prize,[4] kept up-to-date with stylistic developments in the depiction of people and horses. Once established ca. 540–530, these panels and the subsidiary decoration on the neck, shoulder and lower body soon became predictably fixed with few significant changes and

[1] See R. Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras: The Other Side," in *Worshipping Athena: Panathenaia and Parthenon*, ed. J. Neils (Madison, 1996), 144–55, for a list of inscribed and reasonably well preserved Panathenaic amphoras from the sixth to fourth centuries; R. Hamilton, "Archons' Names on Panathenaic Vases," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 96 (1993): 247–48, for a list of fourth century prize-vases with archons' names; and R. Hamilton, *Choes and Anthesteria: Athenian Iconography and Ritual* (Ann Arbor, 1992), 231–40, for an earlier list including uninscribed and later vases. All dates cited in this chapter are B.C.E.

[2] For example, Hanover, Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, C.959.53, Berlin Painter, ca. 480–470: J. Neils, ed., *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens* (Princeton, N.J., 1992), 2, 28, 30, 41, 171 cat. no. 39.

[3] M. F. Vos, "Some Notes on Panathenaic Amphorae," *Oudheidkundige Mededelingen uit het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden* 62 (1981): 39; M. Lang and M. Crosby, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. 10, *Weights, Measures and Tokens*, (Princeton, N.J., 1964), 59.

[4] For the suggestion that the prize for one event could include "a mixture of illustrations, displaying the Panathenaia in all its glory," see Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 142.

only minor decorative variations. Canonical too were the letters TONAΘENEΘENAΘΛON [τῶν Ἀθήνηθεν ἄθλων] which were neatly written in a vertical line beside the left-hand column in front of Athena.[5]

2. *The Inscriptions*

Probably from the very first festival, thought to have been in 566/5, the vases produced for the Great Panathenaia identified themselves by means of this inscription in a seemingly naïve, Archaic fashion. As others have shown, some of the earliest letters were used to designate ownership of property, for example, "I am [the property] of x," or to perpetuate the words spoken on a special occasion, often that of a dedication or gift, after the dedicator or donor had gone.[6] Consequently, Kyle calls the Panathenaic vases "self-declaratory prizes," concluding that "official prizes 'speak' for themselves and emphasize origin (donor) rather than ownership (victor)."[7]

But, as so often with mottoes and abbreviated maxims in Latin and Greek, an English translation is not quite as straightforward as it initially looks. The earliest surviving inscribed example, the Burgon amphora of ca. 560, might encourage one to read each of the later inscriptions also as a predicate genitive, since it (and a couple of early fragments) bear the additional letters, EMI [εἰμί] "I am," after two dots punctuating the words.[8] In his discussion of egocentric

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[5] See, for example, the detail of Hanover C.959.53: Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 41, cat. no. 39.

[6] E. A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (Princeton, N.J., 1982), 197; R. Thomas, *Literacy and Orality in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, 1992), 58–59, 63–65.

[7] D. Kyle, "Gifts and Glory: Panathenaic and Other Greek Athletic Prizes," in *Worshipping Athena: Panathenaia and Parthenon*, ed. J. Neils (Madison, 1996), 115 and 122. Other examples of vessels awarded as the prize in a contest include: an inscribed bronze *hydria*, Athens, National Archaeological Museum X13792, second quarter of the fifth century: O. Tzachou-Alexandri, ed., *Mind and Body: Athletic Contests in Ancient Greece* (Athens, 1989), 142–44 no. 33; L. H. Jeffery, *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece*, 2d ed. (Oxford, 1990), 68 no. 1 (the Dipylon *oinochoe* for dancing, ca. 725), 85 no. 16 (a bronze *lebes* from Herakles' games at Eretria, possibly ca. 500–450), 91 nos. 2–3 (from Boiotian funeral games in the seventh century), 93 no. 16 (a bronze *hydria* from Thebes, ca. 470), 238 no. 8 (a bronze *lebes* from Kyme, possibly ca. 500), and 367 no. 47 (a bronze *hydria* from Notion from games at Lampsakos, ca. 450). See also Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 195 n. 1 and Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 135 n. 95.

[8] London, British Museum B130, ca. 560: Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 30 fig. 19, 40, 93 fig. 59 and 197 n. 61.

funerary and votive inscriptions Svenbro explains this use of the first person (and the first person demonstrative pronouns) as “the most ‘economical’ way of drawing attention to the presence of the object before its beholder.”[9] Such an interpretation might profitably be transferred to the inscription on the Panathenaic vases, although the real prize was the oil, not the pot. With their exceptional size and bodily presence the monumental containers assume a larger identity than the persona-less oil inside, and the egocentric inscription, then, betrays the new single entity created by the oil and the clay which were always awarded together.

But then does the genitive plural, τῶν ἄθλων, come from the masculine noun, ἆθλος “a contest (for a prize)” or the neuter, ἆθλον “a prize (in a contest)”?[10] If it is masculine, τῶν ἄθλων could be translated “of (i.e. from) the contests (i.e. the games),” that is, as a synonym for ἀγώνων, as several scholars have taken it.[11] One might argue that in the more poetic masculine form the thought has been expressed without a preposition by the ablatival genitive of source,[12] but the scansion, – ˘ – – – ˘ – – – ˘, does not suit any common meter of the time. If it is neuter (as cited in Liddell/Scott/Jones), in the sixth century the original thought, expressed by the partitive genitive, will have been “[a part/one] of the prizes.”[13] The distinction made by the late fourth century writer of the *Athenaion Politeia* (60) between the musical and gymnastic contests (ἀγῶνα) and the prizes (ἆθλα) might be considered to lend some support to this interpretation.

In either case, these two words have been naturally split to frame ’Αθήνηθεν, the local ending of which (-θεν) indicates “where from,” so “from Athens,”[14] so that an appropriate translation of the stan-

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[9] J. Svenbro, *Phrasikleia: an Anthropology of Reading in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993), 42.

[10] P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque* (Paris, 1968), 21. Since the neuter plural was occasionally used metaphorically for the masculine “competition, struggle,” the distinction is blurred.

[11] So “from the games at Athens”: Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 29. Compare “Of the Athens Games”: Valavanis’ translation throughout the entries for Panathenaic vases in the catalogue in Tzachou-Alexandri, *Mind and Body*.

[12] H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 1410; E. Schwyzer and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik*, vol. 2, *Syntax und Syntaktische Stilistik* (Munich, 1950), 93–94, c).

[13] Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 1319; Schwyzer and Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik*, 115–16, 5. Compare Hamilton, “Panathenaic Amphoras,” 137.

[14] Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 342; L. Threatte, *The Grammar of Attic Inscriptions*, vol. 1, *Phonology* (Berlin, 1996), 397–402.

dard inscription would be "[I am one] of the prizes from Athens."[15]

There remains a third but less likely possibility, that of a possessive genitive: "I belong to the contests (*or* the prizes) from Athens."[16] Some of the latest SOS amphoras of the first half of the sixth century identified the owner by means of a similar graffito, "I am of so-and-so,"[17] and a stylistic connection between these and the Panathenaic amphoras has already been proposed on the grounds of their similar function, size, shape, and general decorative scheme.[18] Possessive genitives are also found in funerary inscriptions of the type, "I am [the tomb] of so-and-so," and in votive inscriptions for the name of the god to whom the dedicated object now belongs (and to whom it should be returned), but the situation here is different. When one recalls that these vases were specifically created with the intention that ownership should be transferred to the victors (and by them on to others), such a permanent inscription indicating their original inanimate "owners" would be too Panathenaia-specific and restrictive. It would soon have appeared misleading and less appropriate in the commercial process through which this huge quantity of oil was subsequently dispersed throughout the Greek world. In addition, if the expression of Athenian ownership were the aim of the writing, the locative form, 'Αθήνησι "at Athens," would have been more precise.

While the verb itself soon ceased to be written (and one cannot be sure whether all readers would have subconsciously completed the formula or not, even if this had been the writer's expectation),[19] the handwriting of the formulaic *athlon*-inscription remained consistent over time and of high quality. This is especially noteworthy in light of the opportunity for error offered by the repetition of similar letters (one thinks here of the -THENETHEN- element in particular). Although there are, of course, sixteen letters in the inscription,

[15] Compare H. R. Immerwahr, *Attic Script: A Survey* (Oxford, 1990), 183: "to indicate that the vase is one of the prizes for the contests," the neuter being preferred over the masculine, "a poetic word"; Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 135 n. 94 opts for "(intentional?) ambiguity."

[16] Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, 1303; Schwyzer and Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik*, 122–24, 2.

[17] Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 12–14: ten have a name in the genitive, while four include εἰμί (nos. 35, 37 and 40 with another unnumbered in n. 15).

[18] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 38–39.

[19] For abbreviated votive inscriptions see Svenbro, *Phrasikleia*, 38–39, especially n. 57.

there are only seven separate forms, so that the artists who had to write out the same words over a thousand times for each festival could quickly have become bored and careless. However, missing and poorly spaced letters are rare among the surviving examples, and individualistic hands can sometimes be detected.[20]

It has been estimated that at least 1,400 prize-vases (up to 50,000 kg of oil) would have been required every four years, for each winner and runner-up in each event received not one or two, but tens of them, at least in the fourth century. However, less than four hundred of them now survive reasonably intact, that is, possibly 0.4% of the original total.[21] With this caveat in mind and on the foundation laid by the work of Henry Immerwahr and Jenifer Neils, one can, nevertheless, propose the following brief summary of the epigraphical development of the inscription from the sixth to the second centuries B.C.E.[22]

(a) *Period 1: ca. 566–530*

During the first, experimental period of approximately thirty-five years

- the letters were already carefully written retrograde[23] and in a script comparable to that employed for stone inscriptions,[24] but
- the position of the inscription could vary (for example, there are two to the left of the left column, Exekias places one to the left of the right column, and Lydos one horizontally on the B side),
- it could be written in red (as on the Burgon amphora) or black,[25] and

[20] For example, the Burgon amphora (London, British Museum B130) lacks the third epsilon: Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 183, pl. 37 fig. 147. Poorly spaced: New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 07.286.80 (Leagros Group, ca. 520–510) and 56.171.4 (Painter of the Warsaw Panathenaic, ca. 520): D. von Bothmer, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: New York*, vol. 3 (New York, 1963), pls. 41.1 and 40.1. For comments on the characteristics of the handwriting of individual painters, where Beazley's attributions seem to support this line of enquiry, see Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 184.

[21] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 46.

[22] Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 183–85 and Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 40–42.

[23] For an orthograde exception ca. 560–555 see Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 40 n. 66.

[24] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 40, suggests that the use of columns for public inscriptions may have been a factor in the eventual siting of these inscriptions alongside the column at the left.

[25] For the use of red and black paint for alternate lines of stone inscriptions see A. G. Woodhead, *The Study of Greek Inscriptions*, 2d ed. (Cambridge, 1981), 27.

- it could be accompanied by other letters, especially ἐποίησεν-inscriptions (for example, Nikias, Hypereides, the son of Androgeos or Androgenes, Hechekleides, Mnes[iades] and Kallikles) and titles for the sports event on B (for example, men's *stadion, diaulos*).

(b) *Period 2: ca. 530–367*

For over 150 years the *athlon*-inscription retained its position and black color,[26] but

- its direction changed to orthograde ca. 530, and
- other inscriptions became rare: there survive one *kalos*-inscription (Euphiletos on Athena's shield); Sikelos' name in an ἔγραψεν-inscription incised on a right column in the late sixth century, then no makers' names till Bakkhios in 375/4; and a possible *pankration* title on an early fifth century reverse.
- The Ionic alphabet began to be used in the 420s, but, despite the official state adoption of it in 403, it still had not fully replaced the Attic for the *athlon*-inscription even as late as the third quarter of the fourth century.
- Meanwhile, probably early in the fourth century another official-looking inscription, the name of the Eponymous Archon, was gradually added in Ionic beside the right hand column:[27] until ca. 360 about a third of the vases still lacked the archon-inscription, but from then on it was standard.[28]

(c) *Period 3: ca. 367/6-second century* B.C.E.

Finally, for possibly another two hundred years the *athlon*-inscription remained fixed,[29] except that

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[26] See note 2 above.

[27] For a typical example, compare Athens, National Archaeological Museum 20048, the Pourtalès Painter, 363/2: Tzachou-Alexandri, *Mind and Body*, 345 cat. no. 234. The initial date of 392/1 has been arrived at by restoration and deduction. Otherwise the evidence only supports a date in the 370s: J. D. Beazley, *The Development of Attic Black-Figure*, 2d ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1986), 89; N. Eschbach, *Statuen auf Panathenäischen Preisamphoren des 4. Jhs. v. Chr.* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986), 18–20.

[28] Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 239–40.

[29] There are no inscriptions on the second century example in Berlin: P. Demargne, "Athena," in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (Zurich and Munich, 1984) 2.1: 972.152; 2.2: pl. 722 Athena 152.

- the letters were now written *kionedon*, like the "down" answers in crosswords, (some appeared at first with non-*kionedon* archon-inscriptions, and others were still being written *stoichedon* in 363/2, 360/59 and even 348/7),[30]
- probably by the end of the fourth century (the latest extant example belongs to 312/1) the archon-inscription was replaced by the lesser known and less datable names of the Hellenistic officials responsible for the festival (for example, the treasurers and *agonothetai* like the *tamias* Eurykleides named on a third century fragment from the Acropolis),[31]
- some ἐποίησεν-inscriptions were reintroduced (for example, Kittos in 367/6 and a fragmentary name from Eleusis), and a female figure was named Olympias on a reverse of 340/39,[32]
- even before the Athena had turned regularly to the right by 360/59 and frequently afterwards, the *athlon*-inscription exchanged places with the archon-inscription beside the right column (sometimes outside the column at the far right and later still at the left side of the reverse),[33] and
- the handwriting became more calligraphic with serifs.[34]

Further discussion of these changes in the inscription on the prize-vases will follow shortly, but first one should address the question: why was the *athlon*-inscription written so prominently on the vase at all?

3. *The Explanations*

Two interconnected explanations for its inclusion immediately spring to mind and are reflected in the scholarly literature:

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[30] Eschbach, *Statuen*, 42–45, 58–59, 81–83.

[31] S. Dow, "Panathenaic Amphorae from the Hellenistic Period," *Hesperia* 5 (1936): 55–58; G. R. Edwards, "Panathenaics of Hellenistic and Roman Times," *Hesperia* 26 (1957): 331–32; B. Nagy, "The Athenian Athlothetai," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 19 (1978): 307–13 and "Athenian Officials on the Parthenon Frieze," *American Journal of Archaeology* 96 (1992): 64.

[32] Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 119 no. 838.

[33] For example, on London, British Museum B607, 360/59: Beazley, *Development*, pl. 102.1. Compare Edwards, "Panathenaics," 331, 340 no. 14, pl. 78.

[34] See Dow, "Panathenaic Amphorae," 50–52.

1) because it acts as the official title or label for the prize at the time of the Great Panathenaia,[35] and
2) because it serves as a trademark or official seal of quality for the contents for commercial purposes in the months and years following the festival.[36]

That is, it serves two purposes at two different times. Both suggestions appear reasonable and consistent with the acknowledged uses of literacy in general for government, religious, and commercial purposes.[37]

4. *The Problematical Vases*

However, there also survive some Panathenaic amphoras which lack the *athlon*-inscription, while appearing to be identical to the prize-vases in nearly all other respects (i.e. in size, shape, and decorative scheme): for example, Princeton, University Art Museum 1950.10, possibly by the Painter of Würzburg 173 [Bothmer], ca. 500.[38] About a dozen of these have been listed by Jenifer Neils and Richard Hamilton, but the vases in their lists require close scrutiny.[39] Several, if not all, may be withdrawn from consideration as prizes, since, as Neils herself notes for some of them, in the end they display something else unacceptable in their decoration (for example, Ionic capitals as on the Princeton vase) or they are not really full-size. They need not, therefore, be considered too much of a problem, since the prizes were obviously copied in all sizes (from miniatures upwards) with varying degrees of exactitude. The tallest probably come the closest to the real thing, but without the *athlon*-inscription they are,

[35] For example, J. A. Davison, "Notes on the Panathenaea," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 78 (1958): 26; Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 183; and Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 29, 40–41.

[36] For example, Eschbach, *Statuen*, 1; Valavanis in Tzachou-Alexandri, *Mind and Body*, 346; and Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 157 n. 9. As far as I am aware, no evidence has been published to support the idea of official, single-use seals applied to the lids, so that the deliberately fraudulent refilling and sale of the containers with non-Attic or just non-prize oil could have been practised despite the inscription (or even more profitably because of it).

[37] Compare H. J. Graff, "The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Society and Culture," in *Literacy, Society, and Schooling: A Reader*, ed. S. de Castell, A. Luke and K. Egan (Cambridge, 1986), 69 and 74.

[38] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 46, 92, 174 no. 44.

[39] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 45 n. 90 and Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 138 n. 7.

it seems, only some of the best imitations for the oil or ceramic market, not for official festival use.

A more serious problem is created, on the other hand, by some inscribed "prizes" of (it is claimed) an unacceptably small size (i.e. below 55 cm) and irregular proportions, so much so that these are now classified as "amphoras of Panathenaic shape": for example, Frankfurt, ST V2, ca. 480–470.[40] However, it has not yet been established that all the vases need to have been absolutely identical in size and capacity. An early fourth century inscription (*IG*² 2311) listed the prizes allocated for each event,[41] but it could actually be a record of the quantity of oil not the number of vases to be awarded, since ἀμφορεύς means a liquid measure equal to the μετρητής as well as a container. Significantly, too, the author of the *Athenaion Politeia* (60.3) states that the *tamiai* "measure out" (ἀπομετροῦσι) the oil for the *athlothetai* to distribute.[42]

To some extent the perceived anomaly here may have been artificially created by the modern fixation with a standard height of at least 60 cm. If one examines the variation in height between the tallest and shortest prizes in relation to the average as recorded by Hamilton,[43] one finds a difference of roughly 27 cm in the fourth century, 28.5 cm in the fifth and 23 cm in the sixth. The authenticity of the smaller vases from the fourth century is never questioned, and yet proportionally they offered the same scope for short measure. In fact, too little is known about the exact volumes and filling point of these vases in their original state for much weight to be put on conclusions based on their heights.

Nevertheless, various theories have been put forward to explain all these look-alikes without a consensus having been achieved: are they souvenirs, competition models, simple mistakes, workshop overruns, real prizes for the boys' events and runners-up, or containers for the state's export of surplus oil after a Panathenaia?[44]

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[40] K. Deppert, *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum: Frankfurt*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1968), pl. 41. See Vos, "Some Notes," 33–46; Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 46 n. 94; and Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 138.

[41] Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 16 fig. 1.

[42] Compare Hamilton, *Choes and Anthesteria*, 128, "Archons' Names," 243–44 and "Panathenaic Amphoras," 138 n. 6.

[43] For further discussion of the variation in height displayed by vases with archons' names see Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 241–43.

[44] For 'pseudo-Panathenaics' see Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 42–46.

The answer to this question clearly revolves around the nature of the prize-inscription and the perceived value of its inclusion, especially when one might have believed that it was no longer necessary.[45] To judge from the archaeological record, the Archaic Athenian Agora seems to have been flooded with olive oil containers which were not the real Panathenaic prize-vases, but which looked extremely like them. It may have been the Athenians' intention that the presence or absence of the inscription, as most modern scholars believe,[46] should have constituted the distinguishing criterion, and its application may have been controlled. But that control may not have been, nor need have been, rigidly enforced at all times.[47]

After ca. 475 the production of the majority of these imitations apparently stopped. After ca. 450 the commercial production of any other black-figure ware as a whole had ceased (although it did continue to be employed for the head of Athena and the owl on the official amphora measures of the fifth and fourth centuries found in the Agora).[48] The fact that the *athlon*-inscription continued to be written after it really did not need to be tells strongly in favor of the idea that it had become a part of the expected Panathenaic image and less an essential source of information in its own right. From the middle of the fifth century nothing else could be mistaken for or masquerade as an Athenian Panathenaic prize-vase, but the writing was retained because it was now a part of the "trademark" packaging.

At what point in time had that change in value come about? The earliest anomalous examples with a height of approximately 45 cm among the surviving inscribed vases date from the late sixth and early fifth centuries. It seems unlikely that a contemporary Athenian would have failed to see a difference between a prize-vase like that

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[45] Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 138 argues that "chronology is a key factor: early Panathenaics are often uninscribed; late ones are always inscribed."

[46] For example, Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 122, and Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 137–38.

[47] I am grateful to the anonymous reader who suggested that "if the inscription were really valuable in commerce," it would also have been "counterfeited" along with the shape, presumably for illicit gain. This may well have been the case, and the lettering on the best copies may have misled the buyers as to the exact nature of the product inside. However, it seems impossible now to distinguish the "authentic" from any "counterfeit" pieces among the surviving inscribed "prize vases," except by the criteria which have been used to separate out the so-called amphoras of Panathenaic shape.

[48] Lang and Crosby, *Weights, Measures and Tokens*, 58–63 pl. 17.

of the Berlin Painter in Hanover[49] and the vase now in Frankfurt.[50] If there really was a widely known, minimum height for a prize, then these problematical small vases with *athlon*-inscriptions may reveal the first step in the process which saw the status of the writing change from an official sign of authenticity to a decorative feature.

5. *The Changes in the Label*

Whatever their exact *raison d'être*, these oddities tend to attract more than their fair share of scholarly attention, so let us now return to consider how the two purposes for the *athlon*-inscription identified above (the one, a title in a short-term religious context; the other, a trademark in a long-term economic one) tie in with current theories about the extent of literacy versus orality in Athens throughout this time.

In either case who could read it and for whose benefit was it written? It is interesting to note that when Gardiner considered this point in 1912, the Athenian's ability to read the inscription was not even questioned:

> For the Athenian himself it was useless: every Athenian would understand without an inscription the meaning of the Panathenaic amphora. But for the competitor from distant colonies it was otherwise: his fellow-citizens might fail to recognize the vase, and for him the inscription was a useful proof of the honour which he had won.[51]

He went on to imagine a situation in which the inscriptions were omitted when outside involvement at the Games was not anticipated. But today we may ask whether it was directed towards some of the Athenians, non-Athenians but other Greeks, non-Greeks, the official games organizers (*athlothetai*, archons, Treasurers on the Acropolis etc.), the winners, their families and friends, the dealers or customers to whom the winners sold some of their oil, or presumably at various times for various reasons all of the above.

Secondly, the writers of the inscription were presumably literate, but did it matter if some of the viewers were not? The writing may have been for them just a small part of a total image based on size,

[49] See note 2 above.
[50] See note 40 above.
[51] E. N. Gardiner, "Panathenaic Amphorae," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 32 (1912): 188.

shape, color, and decoration by which such vases were immediately recognizable anyway. Once told by someone else what the letters said, they could simply take on board their function as a label and treat them as an extra element in the visual image which validated the prize's authenticity (though not perhaps its capacity).

It seems a fair assumption that the iconographical pattern for these vases was intentionally standardized so soon and for so long because this was seen by someone (or some "body") to be necessary and desirable.[52] There were clear limits set to the variations permitted in the portrayal of the goddess: a wide range was allowed for the superficial decoration of her dress, aegis or helmet, for example, but the core (her stance, gestures, and type of weaponry) changed much more slowly.[53]

At the different stages, therefore, in the very long life-span of the Panathenaic prize-vases, it will prove instructive to detect and, if possible, explain the changes in the writing which may reflect the state of literacy at the time. The following comments are grouped according to three major stretches in time, almost but not quite the same as Immerwahr's categories for the script.

(a) *Period 1: ca. 566–530, when the label was introduced*

At first the writing itself may still have had some novelty value giving added prestige to these vases which were destined initially for appreciation by a citywide, mixed audience. One recalls the sheer passion for labeling demonstrated by Kleitias on the François vase just a little before this period, ca. 570, where almost every person and inanimate object is named.[54]

Certainly it is a reasonable deduction that the neatly written *athlon*-inscription was an integral feature of the front panel on the vases from the first, but there was more variation in its siting and color

[52] For a typical late fifth century example see London, British Museum B605, Kuban Group: P. E. Arias, M. Hirmer and B. Shefton, *A History of Greek Vase Painting* (London, 1962), pl. XXVIII.

[53] Compare M. Tiverios, "Shield Devices and Column-Mounted Statues on Panathenaic Amphoras: Some Remarks on Iconography," in *Worshipping Athena: Panathenaia and Parthenon*, ed. J. Neils (Madison, 1996), 164. Contrast Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 143.

[54] Florence, Museo Archeologico 4209: Arias, Hirmer and Shefton, *History of Greek Vase Painting*, pls. 40–46. For nonsense inscriptions see W. V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), 52 and Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 44–45 and *passim.*

at this time than later. This suggests that it was sufficient that the requisite letters should be legible somewhere in the figured panels, but that the vase manufacturers still had the freedom to choose where exactly to place them and to include other inscriptions, notably ones which named (and therefore advertised) themselves.[55] That the horizontal position on either side of Athena's head could have been chosen is suggested by comparison with the later official amphora measures from the Agora on which the word δημόσιον "belonging to the people" is split in this position (except, interestingly, on one example dated to the first half of the fifth century, where it runs down the wall of the vase beside the owl).[56]

The inclusion of titles identifying the various subjects on the reverse suggests that this too was considered to be necessary in the early period, while the formulaic character of the sports iconography was being established. For example, it is sometimes difficult for us to distinguish the men's from the youths' races or wrestling from the *pankration*, and the writing (e.g. "I am a *diaulos*-runner") suggests that the sixth century viewers had a similar problem.[57]

Despite the customary ellipsis of parts of the verb "to be" in Greek, especially in formulaic expressions, the rapid and total disappearance of the word for "I am" suggests perhaps that the *athlon*-inscription very quickly did come to be regarded as a title or "label" rather than an abbreviated explanatory sentence. That is to say, it is a label for the whole vase and its contents, not a caption for the panel on that side of the vase alone. It answers the questions, "What is it?" and "Where is it from?", not "Who is it in the picture?" or "What activity is depicted?" as on side B. The rarity of true picture captions on Attic vases is confirmed by the exceptional inclusion by Sophilos of the title, ΠΑΤΡΟϘΛΥΣ ΑΤΛΑ, written retrograde in the field of his picture of the games held in honor of Patroklos.[58]

[55] On the apparently haphazard nature of vase inscriptions and the incongruity of "personal references" here see Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 42. For the suggestion that the Panathenaic vases with potter-signatures are actually the models (παραδείγματα) submitted in a presumed competition to win a contract see P. D. Valavanis, "Säulen, Hähne, Niken und Archonten auf Panathenäischen Preisamphoren," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* 102 (1987): 469 n. 9. Compare Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 246 n. 36.

[56] LM 20: Lang and Crosby, *Weights, Measures and Tokens*, 63 pl. 17.

[57] Athens, National Archaeological Museum 2468, Painter of Boston C.A., ca. 550: Tzachou-Alexandri, *Mind and Body*, 247 fig. 139; Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 41–42.

[58] Athens, National Archaeological Museum 15499, ca. 580–575: Immerwahr,

Who might have been responsible for the initial design of these vases and their labeling is an interesting question. Some scholars, in an attempt to associate historical events with identifiable individuals, have suggested that the major development of the Great Panathenaia in the 560s (including the introduction of the prize-vases) should be associated with the political activities of Peisistratos in the years before his first term as tyrant of Athens, while others have allowed Hippokleides, the archon of 566/5, to take responsibility for this initiative.[59]

Kyle locates the inspiration for this "eclectic and yet innovative development" of "civic, self-declaratory prizes of material and symbolic value" firmly in the context of the earlier aristocratic or Homeric tradition of gift giving, which was now extended to the wider civic and commercial sphere.[60] He does not go so far as to define the precise procedure by which someone actually paid for or donated the ceramic containers for the olive oil which "Athena" gifted from her sacred trees. He talks simply of anonymous "leaders" administering the widespread distribution of the oil so as to publicize the status of Athens as "powerful, divinely favored, and wealthy."[61]

The formulaic *athlon*-inscription itself is certainly paralleled by the numerous donor-labels of funeral games prizes of later date. Especially close is a bronze *hydria* from Thebes from about 470, which is inscribed ΤΟΝΘΕΒΑΙΣΑΙΘΛΟΝ [τῶν Θήβαις αἴθλων] "one of the prizes from Thebes," though this may have been written in conscious imitation of the Athenian text.[62] Earlier parallels, from the late seventh century, are provided by the fragmentary inscriptions on at least two of the five bronze Boiotian *lebetes* found on the Athenian Acropolis: on these the expression takes the form, τῶν ἐπὶ τῷ δεῖνα ἄθλων εἰμί "I am one of the prizes [for the funeral games] for so-and-so."[63] A familiar, pre-existing rubric which perpetuated the memory of one individual, seems now to have been adapted to acknowledge and publicize the coordinated role fulfilled by the Athenian "state".

Attic Script, 21 no. 62. According to H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz am Rhein, 1989), 44, this "picture 'title' is unique on Attic vases."

[59] Davison, "Notes," 28–29; Nagy, "Athenian Officials," 62–63; Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 20–21; and Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 117.

[60] Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 117.

[61] Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 123.

[62] Jeffery, *Local Scripts*, 93 no. 16 pl. 9.

[63] Jeffery, *Local Scripts*, 91 nos. 3b and 3c, pl. 7.

While Hamilton has already noted that the use of the form Ἀθήνηθεν may be thought to presuppose both movement of the prize, "a marketable item," away from the vicinity of Athens itself and a non-Athenian reader,[64] commercial reasons may also have made it desirable to indicate the origin of the item by means of the name of the city with the ablatival local ending instead of the ethnic form for the Athenian citizens (that is to say, there is an emphasis on the land which produced the clay and the olives, not the people who awarded the prizes). That a definite choice was made here is suggested by the fact that the opposite preference was detected by Threatte in the stone inscriptions: he noted that Ἀθήνηθεν was never used as an ethnic to identify a person (Ἀθηναῖος being preferred) and that it was "poorly attested on stone" (his earliest example is dated 347/6).[65] And, of course, the use of the partitive genitive, instead of the nominative case, tends to imply that more vases exist in generous supply.

(b) *Period 2: ca. 530–400, when the standardized format was established*

At the beginning of the second period, the surviving evidence suggests that greater control was being exercised on the producers arguably by an external, official source. One *kalos*-inscription, one ἔγραψεν-name, and possibly one event title betray a paucity of supplementary lettering for the first fifty years of this period.

Tighter restrictions imposed on the design of the vases from ca. 530 may have coincided with the interest said to have been shown by Peisistratos' son, Hipparchos, in establishing rules to control the recitation of the Homeric poems at the Panathenaia (Plato, *Hipparchus* 228a–229e).[66] However, limiting superfluous inscriptions on the prizes does little to support his reputed promotion of literacy in general among what is presumed still to have been a largely illiterate populace.[67] The absence of other words certainly stands in contrast with

[64] Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras," 157 n. 9.
[65] Threatte, *Grammar*, 401–2.
[66] Davison, "Notes," 38–39.
[67] Compare S. Stoddart and J. Whitley, "The Social Context of Literacy in Archaic Greece and Etruria," *Antiquity* 62 (1988): 765; Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 52–53; Shapiro, *Art and Cult*, 43–47; and Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 22.

the evidence for at least "craft literacy" provided by the garrulous painters of the Pioneer Group in this period—unless it was precisely to prevent the extension of this activity on to the special vases that Hipparchos or whoever imposed a ban.[68] Later, according to the *Athenaion Politeia* (49.3 and 60.1), this form of control was in the hands of the *athlothetai* who, with the Boule and the treasurer of military affairs, arranged the production of the vases in the potteries.

At least the change in direction of the writing at this point will have offered a technical advantage, even if it did not actually have a technical origin, since it is paralleled by a similar move from retrograde to orthograde for stone inscriptions through the sixth century.[69] While completing the retrograde inscription, the painters ran the risk of rubbing the figure of Athena in the center of the panel. By turning the vase around and running the line from left to right, they could use the straight line of the column as a guiding base line for the letters (though this was not always successful) and steady their hands, if necessary, on the surface not yet coated in black glaze outside the picture field. The chance of damage to the most important area of the unfired decoration would in this way have been reduced.

In line with current developments elsewhere towards the end of the fifth century, the Ionic letters for eta, lambda and omega were admitted into the *athlon*-inscription, i.e. gradually (fig. 1) became (fig. 2).[70]

ΤΟΝΑΘΕΝΕΘΕΝΑΘΙ ΟΝ

Fig. 1

ΤΩΝΑΘΗΝΗΘΕΝΑΘΛΩΝ

Fig. 2

But irregularities exist: for example, on the two vases in the Hildesheim Group, ca. 403, the second eta and final epsilon of ʼΑθήνηθεν have

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[68] For craft literacy in Greece see Havelock, *Literate Revolution*, 59, 188, and 233.

[69] Woodhead, *Greek Inscriptions*, 26–27. Retrograde had a longer life on other vases from the seventh century to the middle of the fifth: Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 12, 27, 92, 98 n. 2, and 104.

[70] For example, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek 3606, Robinson Group, 430: J. Christiansen, "Did the Kleophon-Painter Make Panathenaics?" in *Ancient Greek and Related Pottery: Proceedings of the International Vase Symposium in Amsterdam, 12–15 April 1984*, ed. H. A. G. Brijder (Amsterdam, 1984), 145 fig. 1. According to Christiansen (146) Ionic appears in private Acropolis dedications before ca. 450, more frequently after then and in public inscriptions after ca. 431.

been reversed;[71] and one artist in the contemporary Kuban Group writes Attic on one vase, Ionic on another.[72] These variations suggest both a lack of familiarity, and an easy acceptance, on the part of different painters to this change in a traditional element in the decoration—and one may add a lack of concern for strict uniformity on the part of any inspecting officials.

Once the Ionic alphabet had been adopted by the state in 403, it becomes perhaps more of a puzzle as to why the *athlon*-inscription was still being written in the Attic alphabet (albeit regularly with Ionic lambda, Λ) off and on through the fourth century.[73] It seems highly likely that the old-fashioned lettering was retained because it suited the archaizing style of the figure of Athena and the powerful impression of a traditional product made by the otherwise long-discontinued black-figure technique.[74]

(c) *Period 3: fourth century, when an official dating reference was included*

That there was an element of conservatism (religious or official) involved in this choice to retain Attic lettering seems confirmed by the fact that, in contrast, the archon-inscriptions (and the reintroduced, but still very rare, ἐποίησεν-inscriptions) of the third period are exclusively written in contemporary Ionic letters. In addition, the expression of this supplementary information is more flexible: it may be presented by the verb in the imperfect (for example, Χαρικλείδης ἦρχεν "Charikleides was archon") or as a participle (or it may be a noun) before or after the name (for example, Νικήτης ἄρχων or ἄρχων Νικήτης "Niketes being archon" or "archon Niketes") even on vases for one and the same year (for example, 340/39, 336/5, 332/1, and 328/7), and the epigraphical formula, ἐπὶ Ἀστείου ἄρχοντος "in the archonship of Asteios" occurs on a vase of 373/2.[75]

[71] Hildesheim 1254 and 1253: Beazley, *Development*, pl. 99.3 and 4. (The theta has also been omitted in ἄθλων on 1253.) Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 185, notes here "the common confusion of heta and epsilon for *ē* including syllabic heta after theta."

[72] London, British Museum, B606 and B605: Beazley, *Development*, pl. 99.1 and 2.

[73] Examples survive from 392/1(?), 373/2 with one omega, 371/0, 367/6, 363/2 (also known in Ionic), 360/59, 348/7, 341/0, 340/39 (again also in Ionic), 336/5 (with the lambda on its side and an erroneous N for H in the archon-inscription) and possibly 328/7 with at least one omega.

[74] Compare Threatte, *Grammar*, 50.

[75] J. D. Beazley, "Panathenaica," *American Journal of Archaeology* 47 (1943): 455.

Furthermore, despite the artistic way in which the new inscription was introduced beside the other column so as to balance the traditional one,[76] and despite the ready interchangeability of the two inscriptions when both were present,[77] it is nevertheless noticeable that the *athlon*-inscription remained fixed beside the left column on the occasions when there was no archon-inscription at all (for example, in the 390s, 367/6 with Kittos' signature at the right, and 360/59 with nothing at the right.) That is to say, the "correct" position for the *athlon*-inscription in the overall image was still at the left side, until perhaps the about-turn of the Athena suggested that it should cross over too, because it "should" stretch in front of the goddess and not behind her.

Similarly, the retention of the *stoichedon* writing for up to twenty years after the first use of *kionedon* on the vases might confirm a conservative attitude towards the written label. On the positive side, the vase could now be read in a vertical position on a table or shelf or the floor. The earlier alignment had required it to be held on its side for easy reading, a comfortable position while it was empty or being decorated by the vase-painter, but less convenient when it was full or partly so and being read by a victor or consumer of the oil.

But can such practical convenience explain the change to *kionedon* which was after all quite unusual in Attica? Immerwahr recorded only two examples of *kionedon*, and both consisted of nonsense writing, once on a stele, on Early Classical vases.[78] Threatte referred to only one Late Archaic inscription from Eleusis and four others from much later periods.[79] This alignment for the Panathenaic inscriptions is, therefore, odd, especially since it occurs just at the time when Athenian vases cease to carry much in the way of writing at all. It is possible that the very idea of reading down the columns of letters instead of across them may have occurred to someone trying to read the lines of a neatly gridded *stoichedon* stele, but that must remain pure speculation. Thomas noted changes in the 360s designed to improve efficiency in the public secretariat, but that may be no more

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[76] Compare Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 78. As I argue below, not just stylistic but also more practical and commercial factors may account for the addition of the archon-inscription.

[77] Examples with the *athlon*-inscription now on the left, now the right survive for the years 367/6, 360/59, 336/5, 332/1, 328/7, and 324/3.

[78] Immerwahr, *Attic Script*, 100–101 nos. 678 and 684.

[79] Threatte, *Grammar*, 59.

than coincidental and irrelevant to what could have been an artistically motivated change.[80]

The almost universal addition of the second inscription on to the prize-vases throughout the fourth century can perhaps best be understood if one begins from the premise that it had a very practical purpose and supplied important information of value to someone in a powerful position and/or to the wider, now more literate, community.[81] The name of the Eponymous Archon by its very nature offered an annual date in a way long familiar to Athenians and probably many other Greeks.[82] In the context of a Panathenaic prize-vase the archon-inscription most probably recorded the year in which the vase was created and the oil had been collected.[83] This must have provided a very useful, "packed in" or vintage date and by deduction a "best before" or "use by" one for the winner and the consumers who may have subsequently bought the oil from him. The inscriptions are unlikely to have been added simply to record the date of the prize for its own sake, since, as Thomas has shown, the Athenians were not even "document-minded" before this period, let alone "archive-minded."[84] A similar lack of interest in recording the date is revealed by the addition of the archon-names on only twenty-one mortgage boundary stones between 363/2 and 259/8.[85]

Like the *athlon*-inscription, the archon-inscription also can be seen to have served two purposes, for it had not only this ongoing commercial significance, but also a prior value in the final preparations for the Festival. Each year throughout most of the fourth century

[80] R. Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (Cambridge, 1989), 79–80.

[81] For the extension of Athenian literacy in the fourth century see Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 115 "in the 370s and 360s" and K. Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (Oxford, 1994), 21. The changes in the vase inscriptions at any rate offer no evidence for a major advance in the period ca. 430–400, as suggested by Havelock, *Literate Revolution*, 10 and 83.

[82] See Thucydides 2.2.1 for "international" dating by the priestess at Argos, the *ephor* at Sparta and the archon at Athens, and Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 67 and 90 (from ca. 500).

[83] Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 237–48, rejects the traditional view that the archon-inscriptions officially recorded the fulfillment by them of their obligation to supply that year's quota of oil to the Treasurers, but his "stylistic" explanation for their gradual introduction and repeated inclusion, "to enhance the appearance of the vases," is less persuasive.

[84] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 91 and 96.

[85] Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 57.

the archon had to deliver the oil he had collected to the Treasurers on the Acropolis who stored it there until it was required (*Ath. Pol.* 60.2–3). Even at this stage to have the name of the Eponymous Archon associated with the oil must have offered a brilliant solution to the problem of tracking down and accounting for the separate vintages once more than one year's oil had been collected. Although no evidence for this step has survived in the archaeological record, it does not seem an unreasonable deduction that some note was kept of which was where, even if at this point the oil was stored in huge vats or *pithoi*.[86] Subsequently, when the oil was measured out in the Games year (*Ath. Pol.* 60.3), the Treasurers could easily have transferred it into the corresponding, inscribed and dated vases;[87] for again the scale of the operation suggests that the potters will have manufactured the prize-vases throughout the four-year period and not just in an intensive rush in the last year.[88] Finally, one may infer that each "prize" consisted of a number of vases from each of the preceding years, for surely no one would have wanted to receive only three-and-a-half-year-old oil, while someone else received only the latest.

6. *Word or Image*

This chapter has focused on the written inscription on the Panathenaic vases, but in the context of visual literacy a final thought may be given to the alternative view that minor figural elements in the picture panels may have had a communicative purpose as well as a simply decorative one. Christiansen pointed out the political appropriateness of Nike with an olive wreath as Athena's shield device throughout the Peloponnesian War years from ca. 430 till 418.[89] This was followed ca. 403 by the topical Tyrant-slayers in the Kuban and Hildesheim Groups.[90] Eschbach also suggested that, when in the

[86] Compare Tiverios, "Shield Devices," 167, although he still assumes that the oil was stored on arrival in the prize-vases and that the need to check on the amount handed over by each magistrate explains the presence of the archon-inscriptions.

[87] Compare P. J. Rhodes, *A Commentary on the Aristotelian "Athenaion Politeia"* (Oxford, 1981), 675 and Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 244.

[88] Compare Hamilton, "Archons' Names," 246 and "Panathenaic Amphoras," 142.

[89] Christiansen, "Kleophon-Painter," 146.

[90] Compare Valavanis, "Säulen, Hähne, Niken," 467–80, especially 470, and Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 31–32.

fourth century the shield devices became mundane and ultimately non-existent, the annually changed column-figures served a similar propagandistic function which was directed possibly by the Boule.[91] Useful as "batch" labels, these figures could be "read" at a glance, but, since the thematic subject was occasionally repeated (for example, a variety of Nikai appear at least ten times between 400 and 320 in Eschbach's list), over the longer term the archon-inscription will have proved a more precise dating mechanism for those who required one. A comparable system of double dating was also employed for the military year-classes, which could be identified both by the name of one of forty-two heroes and by the archon of their first ephebic year.[92]

On a similar tack Tiverios recently argued against Boardman's earlier and widely accepted suggestion that the different, but sometimes repetitive, shield blazons of the sixth and fifth centuries were the "trademarks" of the various potteries which made the vases each year.[93] Instead, he proposed that they identified the lessees of the sacred olive trees who had satisfactorily supplied the oil to the state by way of a tax. At the end of the fifth century, he argued, the figures on the columns replaced the blazons, and in turn their bureaucratic function was eventually forgotten once the archon-inscriptions had become canonical.

In all these cases, whether the explanations are correct or not, the Panathenaic prizes are considered to have been conveying information, on the one hand to the general, and on the other to the official, viewer through the medium of small devices or symbols, not written words. By contrast this renders even more striking the deliberate inclusion of the written *athlon*-inscription from even the earliest examples in the sixth century.

7. *The Extent of Literacy*

In conclusion, what has this reassessment of the Panathenaic *athlon*-inscription contributed to our understanding of ancient Greek literacy in general? How wide was its target readership at the various

[91] Eschbach, *Statuen*, 166–69.
[92] Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 79 n. 207.
[93] Tiverios, "Shield Devices," 163–74.

stages of its use? And to what extent can the evidence presented here inform the modern debate regarding orality and literacy?

Thomas has explored the state's control of inscriptions as an extension of its power in general, noting the emphasis on public display and propaganda and also the restrictions on non-official use.[94] The Panathenaic inscriptions similarly served to advertise the city's authority and status in an interstate context. While Thomas focused on the new democracy's restrictions on private funeral memorials, the vases likewise have been shown to be subject to official limitations especially in the late sixth century. In the case of the stone inscription she suggests that it "authorises or embodies the law and . . . the inscription is meant to give permanence to the enactment,"[95] and, "Given the close identity in Greek eyes between the decision, law or treaty, that has been made, and the inscription that records it, these Athenian inscriptions could only be a potent symbol of Athenian power."[96] The same can surely be said of the *athlon*-inscription in relation to the prize: the inscription "authorises or embodies" the prize and "give[s] permanence to" the prize giving. It too becomes "a potent symbol of Athenian power."

Thomas has also established that there was in the early fourth century a greater acceptance of written documentation in legal and political contexts.[97] However, the increase in careful record keeping for the sake of accountability from the 360s is barely reflected in the Panathenaic vases themselves, except that the second inscription became *de rigueur* at about that time. Whatever records were kept of the delivery and storage of the olive oil and the amphoras themselves in the fifth century cannot have been in permanent materials. The introduction of the archon-name on to the prizes in the early fourth century may have been designed to allow for easier checking of the fulfillment of the Eponymous Archon's responsibilities, but it seems more likely to have been instead a dating mechanism inspired by the perishable nature of the contents and eventually adopted because of its usefulness. The Athenian custom was to destroy evidence

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[94] Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, and R. Thomas, "Literacy and the City-state in Archaic and Classical Greece," in *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. A. K. Bowman and G. Woolf (Cambridge, 1994), 33–50.

[95] Thomas, "Literacy and the City-state," 39.

[96] Thomas, "Literacy and the City-state," 45. See also Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 49–51.

[97] Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 41–42.

of a debt once the payment was received, not to immortalize it (*Ath. Pol.* 47–48),[98] and the effort involved in writing the name on to every single vase prior to firing seems excessive compared to a list of numbers and the total written on a wooden or wax tablet retained by the Treasurers.

Robb (and before him Harris in an even more positivist approach) envisaged a society with only craft or craftsman's literacy throughout the archaic and most of the classical period, excluding the aristocrats from the scene until the requirements of fifth century legal and political operations gave rise to a more organized educational system.[99] For Robb "the merchants, traders and craftsmen" were "Greece's first literates" who helped initially to spread the alphabet.[100] The marketing of the prize oil and amphoras in the mid-sixth century will have been of benefit to these members of society in particular, and the inclusion of the *athlon*-inscription will have seemed a natural desideratum to them.

On the other hand, his scenario of a small number of literates outside even the "middle class" would suggest that the inscription failed to reach its full potential audience for a very long time.[101] Artistic and epigraphical evidence confirms that professional scribes still had a role to play and were valued by Greek societies in the sixth century.[102] Nevertheless, to judge from the Panathenaic evidence a basic ability to read, especially such a short text at least, already existed in the wider male population.[103] And one must not forget that, for perhaps the greater part of its life within this "predominantly oral culture," the official inscription on the Panathenaic prizes was supplementary to the carefully constructed and telling artistic program of the whole amphora.[104]

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[98] Thomas, *Oral Tradition*, 53–54 and Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 137–39.
[99] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 135–36.
[100] Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 70 n. 4.
[101] Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 137.
[102] Compare Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 50; Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 87–89 and 96 n. 27.
[103] Compare Thomas, *Literacy and Orality*, 8–11.
[104] Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 122 and 136 n. 99.

CHAPTER NINE

CYCLES AND SEQUENCE IN LONGUS' *DAPHNIS AND CHLOE*

Stephen A. Nimis

The study of so-called "ring composition" has been around for about a century, but there is still considerable skepticism about its existence as an aesthetic strategy as well as disagreement about its meaning and purpose. Aside from the more general observation that authors often return at the end of a discourse to something mentioned at the beginning, or that they begin with an anticipation of their conclusion, more complex examples of ring-like patterns have been argued to be a mnemonic device peculiar to oral poetry as well as a touchstone of the influence of literacy. Characteristic of those approaches that see ring patterns as an organizational structure is the notion that a series of thematic or narrative elements presented in *hysteron proteron* order focuses attention around a central point of paradigmatic significance, so that it is a pattern that must be grasped as a spatial disposition of elements whose impact can be felt only when the design is visualized as such.[1] Elsewhere I have argued that the disposition of elements into ring-like patterns in the *Iliad* is not the result of a conscious attempt to produce meaning by the use of symmetrical designs, but is the result of the activity of performance and composition itself.[2] I would like to extend that argument to a work that is firmly in the world of literacy, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, which is usually dated to the second century C.E. I will argue here that, despite this novel's status as a text composed in the second sophistic by an author who clearly had high literary pretensions and made frequent allusion to numerous antecedent literary traditions, it is best understood as an articulatory process that unfolds

[1] See K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993), who cites and summarizes copious bibliography.

[2] S. Nimis, "Ring Composition and Linearity in Homer," in *Signs of Orality: The Oral Tradition and its Influence in the Greek and Roman World*, ed. E. Anne Mackay (Leiden, 1999), 65–78.

linearly, rather than an object that can be properly understood only when grasped as a whole: that patterns and repetitions of thematic elements are clues to what the author is *doing* rather than symmetrical designs that reflect some model of *meaning* that exists prior to the composition of the novel. I will take as my starting point Bruce MacQueen's analysis of ring-composition in *Daphnis and Chloe*, since it is the most elaborate of a series of attempts to identify patterns as a key to the meaning of the work. The analyses of MacQueen and others identify a range of phenomena that I will account for in another way that focuses on *process*.

Taking his cue from other critics who have noted various formal principles in the story—the cycle of seasons, the framing function of ecphrastic scenes, patterns of repetition, and especially the aetiological stories in the first three books of the novel—MacQueen sets out to identify a structure that will give a spatial wholeness to the story's linear unfolding.[3] In particular, he identifies a pattern of two rings or cycles in each of the first three books, each of which focuses our attention on a central unit, one having to do with rhetoric, the other an aetiological story. I have reproduced his schema for book 1 below:

A. Spring and its occupations (1.9–10)
    B. A wolf, a trap, a rescue (1.11–12)
        C. Chloe's soliloquy (1.14)
            D. Dorkon's machinations (1.15)
                THE SPEECH CONTEST (1.16)
            D'. Dorkon's further machinations (1.17)
        C'. Daphnis' soliloquy (1.18)
    B'. A wolf, a trap, a rescue (1.20)
A'. Summer and its occupations (1.23)
a. A bath with sexual overtones (1.24)
    b. Wolves out of character, and noisy animals (1.25)
        c. The grasshopper (1.26)
            THE STORY OF PHATTA (1.27)
        c'. The pirates (1.28–30)
    b'. Wolves out of character, and noisy animals (1.29–30)
a'. A bath with sexual overtones (1.32)

[3] B. MacQueen, *Myth, Rhetoric and Fiction* (Lincoln, 1990), 16–19, cites H. Chalk, "Eros and the Lesbian Pastorals of Longus," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 80 (1960): 32–51; J. Kestner "Ekphrasis as Frame in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*," *Classical World* 67 (1973): 166–71; and M. Philippides "The 'Digressive' Aitia in Longus' *Lesbiaka*," *Classical World* 74 (1980): 193–9.

Critical to an analysis like MacQueen's is how one characterizes the units, how in particular, one chooses to name an episode; and someone familiar with Longus' novel may find a linear reading of MacQueen's outline an unfamiliar version of the story, especially with episodes with labels like "Wolves out of character, and noisy animals." I am only interested in the assumptions of MacQueen's approach, but it is perhaps a general principle that if you look for ring patterns in a text, you will, as Polyanna noted, surely find them.

It is also important to MacQueen's analysis that there be a clear enough regularity in the occurrence of these cycles or rings in the first three books of *Daphnis and Chloe* for the model to have a kind of predictive power, compelling us to look for a more recherché example of the pattern in book 4, where the cyclical structures focus our attention on an ecphrasis on the altar of Dionysos, as an example of rhetorical declamation analogous to the earlier ones, and on the anagnorisis of the heroine Chloe, as a parallel to the *aitia* related in the other three books. Here is the pattern in book 4:

- A. The coming of Dionysophanes is announced (4.1)
  - B. Preparations begin (4.1)
    - C. The beauty of the garden (4.2–3)
      - **ALTAR OF DIONYSOS**
    - C'. The beautification of the garden (4.4–6)
  - B'. Despoliation and despair (4.7–9)
- A'. The arrival of Dionysophanes is heralded (4.10)
- a. The attempted seduction of Daphnis by Gnathon (4.11–19)
  - b. Daphnis is acknowledged to be Dionysophanes' son and is brought before his father, richly dressed for the first time (4.20–23)
    - c. Dionysophanes tells the story of Daphnis' exposure (4.24)
      - d. Daphnis dedicates his pastoralia (4.26)
        - **AITION OF CHLOE** (4.27–31)
      - d'. Chloe dedicates her pastoralia (4.32)
    - c'. Megakles tells the story of her exposure (4.35)
  - b'. Chloe is brought before her father richly dressed and is acknowledged as his daughter (4.36)
- a. The marriage of Daphnis and Chloe (4.37–40)

From this MacQueen concludes that *Daphnis and Chloe* is really "about" rhetoric and myth, rhetoric represented by the "declamations" in each of the four books, myth by the aetiological tales in each book; and the novel is thus a perfect piece of second sophistry, in which literary tradition itself is the real subject matter: Longus, he says,

"encounters the tradition, and in a profound way loves and respects it; but he situates himself clearly outside that tradition and both signifies and foregrounds its imminent loss of potency."[4]

This view of the second sophistic as belated and preoccupied with vapid imitation is only one version of this cultural movement, and it is a version that clearly is written from the standpoint of the literary canon that preceded, particularly the verse traditions of that canon. Another characteristic of this period is its radical experimentation with new forms and new ideas, especially in prose or in a mixture of verse and prose, an aspect that Bakhtin foregrounds in his discussion of what he calls "novelistic literature,"[5] looking not back, but forward to the emergence of the novel as the premier literary form of the modern world; and it is this aspect of Longus' novel that Winkler foregrounds in the section of his chapter on Longus subtitled "A Pastoral Experiment." Rather than seeing the novel as completely enclosed and totally self-similar, Winkler calls *Daphnis and Chloe* a "theorematic" novel, in which "the author may have no single intention but rather experiments with a variety of possibilities and perspectives, shifting from scene to scene. Though Longus is clearly thinking in terms of a social geometry of desire, it is not clear (and may not be true) that he is committed to a single Euclidean system."[6]

This is quite different from MacQueen's focus on structure, whose purpose, he notes, is to force us readers to move backwards and forwards through the material and in this way to grasp a literary work as a whole and unified object.[7] The abstraction and spatialization of discourse that underlies such an analysis is often associated with literacy, which is itself a matter of abstracting and spatializing discourse. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, through the work of so-called "discourse analysts" that it is often more appropriate to view literary texts from the standpoint of speech, as a process ruled by the dynamics of a communicative framework, than to view them as stable objects sustained by structure.[8] For example, it has been shown that certain kinds of ring patterns are a phenomenon present

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[4] MacQueen, *Myth*, 181.
[5] M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin, 1981).
[6] J. J. Winkler, *The Constraints of Desire* (New York, 1990), 111.
[7] MacQueen, *Myth*, 25 et passim.
[8] E. J. Bakker, *Poetry in Speech: Orality and Homeric Discourse* (Ithaca, 1997).

in the most ordinary kinds of discourse and are produced by a whole range of pragmatic considerations that have nothing to do with focusing attention on a centralized unit. Analyses of ordinary conversation reveal that speakers frequently backtrack and reiterate material to emphasize or clarify something, or even to correct a misstatement. The ring-like patterns produced by such strategies of effective speech have nothing to do with symmetry per se, but with the manner in which units are integrated into the overall flow of a discourse.[9] On a larger scale, Mabel Lang accounts for ring-like patterns in Herodotus' *Histories* as characteristic of a text that alternates between identifying distant narrative goals with a kind of thesis statement and moving towards them. She calls these thesis statements "directional arrows" that define a trajectory, but do not determine completely the path taken to reach it.

> [T]he way in which the narrative moves is not within a preconceived structure of logic and causality but, as Herodotus' own word "path" suggests, is very like putting one foot in front of the other toward some destination already glimpsed.[10]

Lang's point is not that Herodotus plunged ahead blindly without ever rethinking or recasting his material, but rather that the actual articulation of the story, how one thing leads to another, is as much a part of the creative process as the identification of long range goals; and that the linear unfolding of the work will bear the traces of that creative process, even if it is subjected to reflection and revision.

What I want to identify in *Daphnis and Chloe* are analogs of such "directional arrows," moments where the text identifies a goal or a general path to be taken, or retrospectively confers some kind of meaning on what has been narrated, identifying in this way a kind of unfolding or evolving logic. In this way, elements that have been read as "structural" devices or thematic elements—the seasonal notices, the embedded narratives, dreams and descriptions—can be read instead as elements our author invokes and manipulates to manage

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[9] See D. Tannen, *Talking Voices: Repetition, Dialogue, and Imagery in Conversational Discourse* (Cambridge, 1989). For application of these ideas to Homer, see E. Minchin, "Ring-Patterns and Ring-Composition." *Helios* 22 (1995): 23–35; E. J. Bakker, "Discourse and Performance: Involvement, Visualization and 'Presence' in Homeric Poetry," *Classical Antiquity* 12 (1993): 1–15; Bakker, *Poetry in Speech*, 115–21; B. Peabody, *The Winged Word: A Study in the Technique of Ancient Greek Oral Composition as Seen Principally through Hesiod's* Works and Days (Albany, 1975).

[10] M. Lang, *Herodotean Discourse* (Cambridge, 1984), 4.

the flow of the story on a local level, part of the micro-management of individual scenes. At the same time, places in the text that thematize poetics and narrative may not indicate an authorial interest in these issues in the abstract, but may be symptomatic of a greater focus on the problem of telling this particular story at this particular point; that is, they may be places where the author is actually formulating a new direction for the story, anticipating difficulties or objections from his imagined audience, or wondering how to make a smooth transition to the next segment of the story. Such a reading is more consistent with seeing the novel as experimental and heuristic, and I would like to give a few examples that show how a reading of the text as processive would contrast with a reading of the text that focuses on structure and visual pattern.

Beginning at the Beginning

For example, in the novel's proem, a hunter visiting Lesbos sees a series of paintings and is inspired to write a story by the sight of them. Critics have discussed at length the numerous thematic and aesthetic elements in this proem and explained in many ways how it anticipates the whole story. MacQueen, for example, identifies two sets of ring patterns analogous to those he identifies in each of the four books.[11] His account takes for granted that the proem is composed with the rest of the novel more or less fully finished; that like many introductions, the proem is actually composed *last*. However, the series of paintings is an explicit visualization that is represented as the impetus or source for the story, a directional arrow, so to speak. I have indicated below in parentheses where in the novel the events mentioned in the paintings are narrated. The passage is marked by the parallelism, balanced cola and homoioteleuton so pervasive in Longus, but it also lacks connectives. It is the kind of list which

[11] In a similar vein Kestner, "Ekphrasis"; A. Wouters, "Longus, *Daphnis et Chloe*: le prooemium et les histoires enchâssées, à la lumière de la critique récente," *Les études classiques* 62 (1994): 131–67. For the prologue as a statement of Longus' poetics, F. Zeitlin, "The Poetics of Eros," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. D. Halperin, J. Winkler, F. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), 417–64; and R. Hunter, "History and Historicity in the Romance of Chariton," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.34.2 (1994): 1055–86.

can be extended, but if something is added, it is necessary to add two items. The list thus has structure, but is also open-ended.

γυναῖκες ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς τίκτουσαι	women giving birth
καὶ ἄλλαι σπαργάνοις κοσμοῦσαι,	others dressing the babies
παιδία ἐκκείμενα,	babies exposed (1.2–6)
ποίμνια τρέφοντα	animals suckling them (1.2–6)
ποιμένες ἀναιρούμενοι	shepherds adopting them (1.3–6)
νέοι συντιθέμενοι	young people pledging love (2.39)
λῃστῶν καταδρομή	a pirate's raid (1.28)
πολεμίων ἐμβολή.	an enemy attack (2.21–31).

Pandiri notes that when the author reports the four pairs of scenes on the paintings, it is as if he "were scanning the table of contents of an adventure romance."[12] In fact several of these images do not occur in adventure romances at all, but are part of the narrative apparatus of New Comedy, in which an anagnorisis of foundlings often provides a mechanism for reconciling spontaneous love with economic or social realities. Since the novel proper begins with the discovery of the two foundlings being suckled by animals, the first pair of events is not really represented in the story at all, but only anticipates in a general way the concluding anagnorisis. Moreover, the other three pairs of episodes mentioned take us about half way through the novel, to the mutual pledges of love at the end of book 2. Therefore, rather than a table of contents for an already finished composition or an introduction written *ex post facto*, I would see this list of topics in the proem as a preliminary agenda, as the outline of a yet-to-be-composed work. As such, it puts forth in a general way the shape of the story by pointing to its New Comedy conclusion, but makes only a modest reference to the heart of the story, the deferral of that conclusion as Daphnis and Chloe participate in numerous other stories, often unwittingly. In this way, the proem indicates how the middle of *Daphnis and Chloe* opens up as a space of broad narrative possibility that can be extended and redirected indefinitely and with multiple and contradictory purposes, until it is recuperated in a New Comedy conclusion.

[12] T. Pandiri, "*Daphnis and Chloe*: The Art of Pastoral Play," *Ramus* 14 (1985): 116.

Beginning Again in the Middle

After the scene has been set in the opening paragraphs, the story begins with the arrival of a she-wolf, a contrivance, we are told of Love himself, one of several divine movers of the plot. The result is the first feelings of erotic arousal between the two children, followed by a series of escalations of their feelings prompted by other events (an attempted rape, a pirate raid, the raid of the Methymneans) until they swear oaths of fidelity at the end of book 2. With the arrival of Lykainion, the "wolf woman" in book 3, the narrative takes a dramatic change in direction.[13] After the instruction of this person, the charming symmetrical ignorance of Daphnis and Chloe ends and the more conventional issues of virginity, identity and marriage and their New Comedy plot trajectory come to the fore and continue in the fore till the end of the novel. The story thus falls into two main halves, as Konstan has shown, between which he identifies a dissonance, a double perspective on sexuality that simultaneously construes marriage as the culmination of adolescent sexual experimentation, but also leaves room for an alternative, utopian image of sexuality that is not simply the prelude to phallic penetration. Konstan goes on to note examples of a kind of textual amnesia in the second half about certain critical issues from the first half.[14] In this view of the story, the episodes that occur at the beginning of book 3 can be seen as analogous to the proem, an organizational moment that is the very means by which the author manages his transition to the Lykainion episode that propels the story in a new direction.

Book 3 opens with the Mytileneans beginning a war against the Methymnians that is aborted in the next paragraph, literally coming from and going nowhere. It has been noted that this brief war episode is thematically a sharp contrast to the pastoral world of the novel. However, with its unexpected beginning and end (ἀδόκητον ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος) with no middle in between, it is also *formally* a negative image of the novel itself, with its generic beginning and end,

[13] D. Levin, "The Pivotal Role of Lycaenion in Longus' *Pastorals*," *Rivista di Studi Classici* 25 (1977): 5–17. S. Epstein, "Longus' Werewolves," *Classical Philology* 91 (1995): 58–73, analyzes the way wolves and wolf-like characters serve as important motivaters of plot development.

[14] D. Konstan, *Sexual Symmetry* (Princeton, 1994), 85–90.

between which there is an indefinite and indeterminate middle. This unusual episode is a thematization of narrative organization, especially focusing on proper beginnings and endings, something continued in the next paragraph with a description of winter as the closing off of narrative possibility: a sudden snowfall blocks all the roads and locks all the farmers in their homes, compelling Daphnis and Chloe to wait for spring as if a rebirth from death (ἐκ θανάτου παλιγγενεσίαν). It is as though our author, having completed the episodes of the story identified in the proem, is now preparing to launch off on a new path that was less fixed in his mind when he began. As Daphnis contrives to encounter Chloe at her home, there is an amusing monologue in which he tries out various scenarios to explain his appearance there ("I've come to get a light for a fire," "I've come to ask for bread," "I need some wine," "a wolf chased me"). The authorial dilemma of what to narrate next seems to be expressed in Daphnis' dilemma about what to do next. We readers have been invited all along to adopt the sophisticated perspective of the author, and now Daphnis becomes assimilated to that same perspective as he becomes a hunter, like the author at the beginning of the story, and takes action to move the story along. At the same time, Chloe's passivity is emphasized in this section: she sits at home learning domestic activities and listening to her stepmother (ἡ δοκοῦσα μήτηρ) talk about marriage, and is said to be less clever than Daphnis.

What interests me is the way this reorientation is signaled at the beginning of Book 3 and rationalized by a kind of textual logic involving a series of comparisons. The following sentences are taken from the opening paragraphs of Book 3:

> The Methymneans regretted acting *more impetuously* (ὀξύτερα) rather than *more moderately* (σωφρονέστερα).
>
> The Mytileneans found peace *more profitable* (κερδαλεωτέραν) than war.
>
> To Daphnis and Chloe winter was *more bitter* (πικρότερος) than war.
>
> To the farmers winter is *more sweet* (γλυκύτερον) than spring itself.
>
> Daphnis is *more clever* (συνετώτερος) than the girl.

There is a kind of pseudo-syllogistic movement here that begins with an opposition of moderation and spontaneity, moves from war and peace, winter and spring to produce somehow the conclusion that Daphnis is more clever than Chloe: not a logical conclusion, but a textual conclusion. These comparisons introduce for the first time a

differentiation of adult desire from that of the protagonist children that could be summarized something like this: the adults prefer moderation[15] to passion, and hence prefer peace to war; Daphnis and Chloe, however, prefer even war to winter; but the adults prefer winter even to spring. This is then associated with a gender differentiation, for we are next told that Chloe was resourceless (ἄπορος καὶ ἀμήχανος), while Daphnis was capable of formulating a device (σόφισμα) to bring about his desire to see Chloe. We see here the beginning of an important thematic shift toward the asymmetry of the children's experience, which culminates in the intervention of the Lykainion, the "older woman from the city," who gives Daphnis the superior knowledge he retains till the end of the novel. That this important thematic shift is accompanied by a profusion of references to beginning and ending, life and death, war and peace, winter and spring, also telegraphs to us that the author is more intensely preoccupied with ending and beginning properly, with inaugurating a new direction while maintaining continuity with what preceded, with linking properly what is unexpected to what is expected.

Time

The seasonal notices have also been seen as structural devices that lend unity and wholeness to the text, especially by Chalk, who reads the novel as a mystery text. After identifying a basic pattern of Longus' narrative, he admits that Longus "does not adhere to the pattern with monotonous regularity, and in the cases of the two autumns, each of which occupies a Book or more, he complicates the pattern, or (in the case of the second) abandons it completely."[16] MacQueen is sometimes compelled to make similar concessive statements about the relative prominence of structure, and indeed only some of the seasonal notices fit into his system of cycles. Thus "Spring and its occupations" (1.9–10) is balanced by "Summer and its occupations" (1.23) in book 1; while in book 3, "Winter and its effects on Daphnis and Chloe" (3.4–8) is balanced by "Spring and its effects

[15] "Moderation" (*sophrosyne*) is a key term from the proem differentiating the author from his characters. See S. Goldhill *Foucault's Virginity* (Cambridge, 1995), 6–9.

[16] Chalk, "Eros," 39.

on Daphnis and Chloe" (3.12–13); but the references to the two autumns lie outside his arrangement. Here is a list of the seasonal notices and the episodes they introduce:

1.9	Spring: she-wolf (*lykaina*)
1.23	Summer (intensified passion of Daphnis and Chloe)
1.28	Late Autumn (μετόπωρον) (invasion by pirates)
2.1	Autumn (ὀπώρα) (instruction of Philetas)
3.3	Winter (Daphnis' intrigues)
3.12	Spring (instruction of *Lykainion*)
3.24	Summer (intensified competition for Chloe's hand in marriage)
4.1	Autumn (μετόπωρον) (invasion by masters)

The most noteworthy symmetry does not seem to be within individual books, but between the two sequences of spring-summer-autumn, separated by the single winter episode falling right in the middle of the story, specifically in what I have identified as the transitional sections at the beginning of book 3. This coincides with the view of the novel as split into two halves described above. Also noteworthy is the repetition of the arrival of autumn at the end of book 1 and the beginning of book 2 with two words for the season that seem to be used in reverse order (first μετόπωρον at 1.28, then ὀπώρα at 2.1), the first time introducing the relatively minor pirate episode, the second before the introduction of Philetas, whose instruction significantly advances the story. This nonchalance indicates that these references to time are not primarily symbolic or realistic: they are convenient and conventional elements of cohesion and transition that bind together discrete portions of text; and they also indicate moments when our author is more explicitly exercising control over the direction of the story, infusing it with direction and energy. It is their traditional symbolic associations that make temporal indicators especially useful for this task, but Longus is less concerned with the thematics of natural time than with using temporal indicators as directional arrows that initiate a forward movement of the story.

Descriptions and Divine Visions

The mention of gardens and ecphrastic descriptions, sometimes accompanied by dreams and visions of deities, also occur at moments where narrative resources are being gathered for a movement forward. Froma Zeitlin notes that the description of the garden of Lamos at

the beginning of book 4 seems to be an icon of the whole story, quadrated and four plethra in breadth corresponding to its four books.[17] To me it is parallel to the proem in being a cognitive moment where a narrative agenda is being formulated; as a place where, as P. Hamon characterizes descriptions, "the narrative comes to a temporary halt, while continuing to organize itself."[18] At the center of the garden is a temple to Dionysos with a series of paired paintings similar to those of the proem. The paintings describing various myths of Dionysos seem to have little to do with the plot of the following narrative, but as others have noted, Dionysos is a pertinent reference for a denouement that will be structured and articulated along the lines of New Comedy.[19] Zeitlin notes further that as a *paradeisos* the garden is a particularly urban view of country life and hence looks forward to the arrival of the urban owner of the estate—whose name happens to be Dionysophanes. Throughout the novel—and throughout the other novels as well—divine agents are often introduced in an *ad hoc* way, as the story changes from scene to scene. Rather than seeing the succession of divine agents—the nymphs, Eros, Pan, Dionysos—to have a religious or thematic significance as such, they can be seen as part of the inherited textual resources of the novelists for managing the story, here redeployed for infusing the narrative with movement forward, not unlike the way Homer can invoke Zeus to redirect his plot or the way tragedians can use the *deus ex machina* to bring about a conclusion. Thus when the Methymnean general has a dream in which he is told that he is holding a young girl about whom Eros wishes to make a story,[20] this could be read as the partial revelation of an already established story, as it might be had it occurred in an epic or a tragedy; but it is perhaps better seen as a programmatic statement that itself changes the direction of the story in the very act of announcing it, what speech act critics call a "performative."

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[17] Zeitlin, "Poetics," 451.

[18] P. Hamon, "What is Description?" in *French Literary Theory Today: A Reader*, ed. T. Todorov (Cambridge, 1982), 170. For description in the ancient novel, see S. Nimis, "Memory and Description in the Ancient Novel," *Arethusa* 31 (1998): 99–122.

[19] See Pandiri, "Daphnis and Chloe"; and Zeitlin, "Poetics." Cf. Chalk, "Eros," 45–47, on the religious importance of Dionysos.

[20] This statement is frequently taken as a self-reflexive. See J. Morgan, "*Daphnis and Chloe*: Love's Own Sweet Story," in *Greek Fiction*, ed. J. Morgan and R. Stoneman (Routledge, 1994), 64–79.

The Inset Tales

Let me return now to the aetiological stories that were so important in MacQueen's analysis because they were centralized by the rings he identified. Many ingenious and mutually contradictory attempts have been made to integrate these stories thematically with the novel as a whole. Their progressive violence has been viewed both as a parallel to the story, and as a negative foil to the story.[21] The stories have been seen as part of the religious or allegorical meaning of the story; or as indicative of the playful inconsequentiality of Longus' story.[22] However, if the novel is experimental in the way I have been suggesting, rather than unified by some overarching symmetrical design, these inset tales can be seen to serve a different function: When presented with the embedded stories, the reader is prompted to look for parallels and contrasts with the larger story that the characters themselves cannot or do not see. It is not so important that these stories actually have a consistent relation to an overall plot, but merely that they prod the reader to make some tentative inferences. Nor is it essential that those inferences are proved to have been right or wrong by the novel's conclusion. Just as various elements orient the story in a forward direction on a local scale, these inset stories initiate an interpretive process that also has a local provenance. Simultaneously complete in themselves and also containing tantalizing connections with the larger story of Daphnis and Chloe, the *aitia* create an illusion of wholeness and authorial perspective that satisfies tentatively the reader's expectation of unity. Rather than indicative of a structure that is the key to understanding the poetic purpose of Longus, these inset stories can be seen as symptomatic of a sense on his part that the reader needed some prompting to keep making sense of the story. They also show with particular clarity how the prose novel is a discourse organized less around the activity of a performer than around the interpretive activity of a reader, to whom the promise of illumination and full

[21] For example, Pandiri "Daphnis and Chloe," 132; S. Deligiorgis "Longus' Art in Brief Lives," *Classical Quarterly* 53 (1974): 1–9; M. Philippides, "The 'Digressive' Aitia." For a useful survey, see J. Morgan "Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*: A Bibliographical Survey 1950–1995," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.34.3 (1997): 2238–41.

[22] For example, Chalk, "Eros"; R. Hunter, *A Study of* Daphnis and Chloe (Cambridge, 1983).

meaning must be held out as an incentive to keep going forward.[23] The distribution of the three inset stories near the ends of books 1, 2 and 3 thus provide a ballast to these more experimental portions of the novel, seeming to affirm a meaning shared between author and reader, while simultaneously provoking the kind of private and personal interpretation that becomes the hallmark of the modern novel.

[23] S. Nimis, "The Prosaics of the Ancient Novel." *Arethusa* 27.3 (1994), 387–411.

CHAPTER TEN

PRACTISED SPEECH: ORAL AND WRITTEN CONVENTIONS IN ROMAN DECLAMATION

Margaret Imber

In this paper, I would like to consider the relationship between the texts and practices of Roman declamation. A considerable number of declamatory texts has survived and from these we can reconstruct the various ways in which Romans declaimed in the late Republic and early Principate. Modern students of ancient declamation have typically, and I think wrongly, studied the texts separately from the practice. Pseudo-Quintilian, the Elder Seneca and Calpurnius Flaccus have been, for the most part, the domain of a handful of heroic, textual scholars. For most other classicists, Roman declamation has been a practice mentioned in histories and handbooks of rhetoric and education with varying degrees of resignation, disbelief and distaste. The reason we have reached a state so paradoxical for classicists—few have wanted to explore a richly documented field of cultural history—lies in a fundamental misapprehension of the texts of declamation. Everyone knows that declamation was a pedagogy which was intended to train Roman boys to become advocates and orators; that is, to be good speakers. Everyone knows that declamation was a form of ludic, competitive, *oral* performance. Nevertheless, we have studied the texts of declamation as a literary or sub-literary genre, or as an ancillary to literature. I believe that we should study them as written evidence of an enduring oral practice and tradition.

I will begin by discussing the texts of declamation. Then I will describe the Roman pedagogical practice of declamation—a tradition of oral performance. Finally, I will argue that by studying the texts and practices of declamation together we can achieve a number of analytical benefits: we will better understand both the peculiar traits of these texts, which have been criticized since Quintilian, and the value of declamatory pedagogy to Roman culture, a value which has been questioned since Quintilian, and in addition we will

learn something about the way Roman pedagogical practices of the late Republic and early Principate transmitted Roman cultural values.

Declamatory Texts

There are four principal texts in the declamatory canon: the *Declamationes Minores* and *Declamationes Maiores* attributed to Pseudo-Quintilian, the *Controversiae* of the Elder Seneca, and the *Declamationum Excerpta* of Calpurnius Flaccus.[1] The authors are reasonably uniform in their presentation of the declamatory material; a good example of the genre is Pseudo-Quintilian's *Declamatio Minor* 246 (Appendix, #1).

Every declamatory text contains at least two principal units: the *controversia* and the *declamatio*. The *controversia* contains the title of the text and a brief factual statement describing a conflict or series of conflicts between two individuals that has culminated in a lawsuit or hearing before a tribunal. In addition, a *controversia* often contains a statement of one or more laws that relate to the factual and legal issues raised in the conflict. Just as frequently, however, a *controversia* will contain no laws.

The presentation of the declamatory material after the *controversia* varies according to the author and the kind of declamation he is recording.[2] The *Declamationes Minores*, for example, is a teachers' manual. Once ascribed to Quintilian, scholars now doubt that this text is his work, but are fairly confident that it is the work of a teacher in his school.[3] Most *controversiae* in this author are followed by *ser-*

[1] M. Winterbottom, *The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian* (Berlin and New York, 1984); M. Winterbottom, ed., *The Elder Seneca: Declamations*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1974); L. Håkanson, ed., *Declamationes XIX maiores quintiliano falsae ascriptae* (Stuttgart, 1982); L. Sussman, trans., *The Major Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian: A Translation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987); L. Sussman, *The Declamations of Calpurnius Flaccus: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Leiden, 1994). The Elder Seneca also authored a collection of *Suasoriae*, a speaking exercise related to declamation. I will not discuss the *Suasoriae* in this paper, but most of what I say about declamation holds true for *suasoriae* as well. The best text and only complete English translation of the *Suasoriae* are contained in Winterbottom, *Elder Seneca*, vol. 2.

[2] It is impossible to say whether this format was the product of those who first wrote down the *controversiae* and *declamationes*, or if subsequent editors and redactors in the tradition developed this style of presentation.

[3] On the history of the attribution to Quintilian, see M. Winterbottom *Minor Declamations*, xii–xix. On the *Declamationes Minores* as practical applications of Quintilian's pedagogical and rhetorical theories, see J. Dingel, *Scholastica Materia: Untersuchungen zu den Declamationes Minores und der Institutio Oratoria Quintilians* (Berlin, 1988).

mones or comments which are meant to explain to the student the particular rhetorical problem posed in each assignment and to suggest the approach the student should take in composing his declamation (to argue the spirit, not the letter of the law, for example). Any given text in the *Declamationes Minores* might also contain models for various sections of a student's declamation. Only a few contain extended or complete declamations. A few provide no models at all, offering only *sermones*.[4]

The declamatory material in the Elder Seneca's collection, in contrast to this school format, is somewhat different. After the *controversia* Seneca offers excerpts of his friends' declamations. These focus on the declaimers' *sententiae*—witty aphorisms that encapsulate the speaker's rhetorical point. While some excerpts are extended, Seneca usually has given us only the best bits of each declamation, that is, excerpts from multiple declaimers arguing the same side of the case. Then, in the *pars altera*, Seneca offers excerpts from some of the very same declaimers, arguing the opposing side of the case. After the excerpts, Seneca provides the *divisio*, or his analysis of each speaker's argument and style. The Elder Seneca's *Controversia* 1.5, "Raptor Duarum (The Man Who Raped Two Girls)," is a typical example. While Seneca maintains the form of presentation of the *controversiae* found in the *Declamationes Minores*, he is quite selective in his quotations from the declamations made in response to the *controversiae*.

The textual tradition of the Elder Seneca is somewhat bedeviled; only about half the books survive in full, and when we turn to the remaining books, we are left with only the "sound bites". The manuscript tradition provides only an anonymous author's excerptions of Seneca's excerpts. The amount of excerption in Calpurnius Flaccus is as great as that in the excerpted books of Seneca. We know absolutely nothing about Calpurnius Flaccus, though scholars suspect, on the grounds of style and usage, that he wrote at the end of the first and beginning of the second century, C.E.[5] As in the other authors, while the declamations in Calpurnius Flaccus are excerpted, the *controversiae* are presented in full. These declamations, unlike those of Pseudo-Quintilian and the Elder Seneca, however, contain no *divisiones* or *sermones*.

Finally, the *Declamationes Maiores*, also attributed to Pseudo-Quintilian,

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[4] See, for example, *Declamatio Minor*, 357.
[5] Sussman, *Calpurnius Flaccus*, 6–9.

is the only text in the canon to provide complete declamations after the *controversiae*. These declamations are much longer and employ a significantly wider and more sophisticated range of rhetorical devices than the model paragraphs in the *Declamationes Minores*. The nineteen declamations contained in the *Declamationes Maiores* appear to be performance pieces of professional *rhetores* or school teachers. They contain no *divisiones* or *sermones*.

The Orally-derived Nature of the Controversiae

Examination of the *controversiae*, more than any other section of a declamatory text, reveals how these texts in general record the actual oral practice of declamation. One of the most striking features of our declamatory recorders is the care they take to preserve these *controversiae*. While the declamations themselves may be ruthlessly excerpted, the *controversiae*, that is the problems which generate declamatory compositions and performances, are meticulously preserved. In each of the declamatory authors the *controversiae* have an identical format: title, laws, and facts of the hypothetical case.[6] In contrast to the great care declamatory writers take to maintain this format, they never identify the authors of the *controversiae*. Thus we have an odd paradox. On the one hand, Seneca's stated purpose in writing the *Controversiae* is to ensure that the declaimers who have invented the most striking *sententiae* will receive credit for their ideas.[7] On the other hand, Seneca is not in the least interested in preserving their complete declamations, or in identifying the author of the problem that prompted such originality. The solution to this paradox lies in the oral nature of the *controversiae*, evident in their generic components: facts, characters and titles.

In reviewing the facts, or narrative portion of the declamations, it quickly becomes apparent that, despite the great number of surviving *controversiae*, the corpus is characterized by a limited number of topical themes. Once the student *rhetor* has declaimed about the wicked stepmother and adulterous wife, the pirate who has kidnapped someone's son or daughter, the rivalry of rich and poor man, the

[6] Examples 2–5 in the Appendix reproduce this format, indicating the titles in bold face, the laws in italics and the facts in ordinary text.

[7] Seneca, *Controversiae* 1 pr. 10.

father burdened with both a dissolute and a sober son, the rapacious tyrant, the mother who must protect a son against a tyrannical father and the rape victim who must choose between her rapist's death and dowerless marriage to him, he has covered almost all the topics of the *controversiae*. Simonds documents only twenty-nine themes in all of the Elder Seneca.[8] These themes, moreover, are easily combined. The pirate blends nicely with the dissolute son. The rivalry between rich man and poor man is spiced quite piquantly with the addition of the rape victim, who also can add a note of melodrama to *controversiae* concerned with tyrants.

The themes of declamation, like that of many, but not all oral traditions are agonistic.[9] Declamation is concerned only with competition and conflict. These themes are repeated over and over in the *controversiae*, so that, for example, no matter how many times stepmothers poison their stepsons, widowers persist in remarrying. Repetition of action also occurs within individual *controversiae*, a narrative technique often found in orally-derived literature as Ong has noted.[10] The *controversia* of *Declamatio Minor* 300 (Appendix, #5) is a good example. It tells us of multiple trials relating to the same conduct: A husband has accused his wife of adultery before a family *consilium* in which their son, who has acted as judge, refused to convict his mother. The husband then successfully sues his wife on the same charge in a public trial. He then repudiates his son who now sues him for unjust repudiation. It is this last suit that is the subject of the student's assignment.[11]

Just as the narrative themes of the *controversiae* are repeated, so are the litigants, who are usually stock characters such as one finds in Roman comedy: pirate chiefs, wicked tyrants, lovesick boys and saucy prostitutes. The *controversiae* provide no motives, no distinguishing identities, no character development. Russell's description of the

[8] T. S. Simonds, *The Themes Treated by the Elder Seneca*, (Ph.D.diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1896), 68–70.

[9] W. J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (New York and London, 1982), 43–45.

[10] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 39–41. It is this feature of repetition both within and between *controversiae* that has lead Mary Beard to characterize declamation as the true site of Roman mythopoesis. M. Beard, "Looking (harder) for Roman myth: Dumézil, declamation and the problems of definition," in *Mythos in mythenloser Gesellschaft: Das Paradigma Roms*, ed. F. Graf (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1993), 56.

[11] Examples 1 and 4a in the Appendix also reveal this narrative trait of internal repetition.

personae of Greek declamation is also true for Roman: "[T]he declaimer had to invent his character."[12] Consider the example of *Declamatio Minor* 277 (Appendix, #3). The facts simply state, "[a] husband kills his pregnant [wife] caught in the act of adultery." Who was the pregnant adulteress? A girl torn from her lover and thrust against her will into a hated marriage? Is her husband enraged at her betrayal or coldly calculating the value of her dowry? Inquiring minds wanted to know, and to bright young declaimers fell the burden of creating various plausible scenarios. A declaimer could hypothesize any motive or quote conversations, dreams, or soliloquies for his characters, and as long as he did not contradict the few facts that the *controversiae* offered, the limits of his imagination were his only constraint.

These features of the plots of the *controversiae*—limited and easily combinable themes, striking but stock characters, and fabulous actions (murder, adultery, political putsches, kidnapping and rape)—are all characteristics of orally-derived literature.[13] Indeed, as Foley has argued, it is this combination of features that provides the basis of an oral tradition's stability while still providing performers within that tradition the possibility of spontaneity and innovation.[14] The factors of stability and innovation served well the practice of declamation, both in its pedagogical and recreational incarnations; they permitted the declaimer to focus his inventive energies on the character's motive and his own exposition.

A student could rely on his audience's familiarity with the plot of the *controversia* even before he rose to speak. As he acquired some sophistication in his declamations, he could by allusion and diction summon to the audience's mind a far more complex network of meaning and association than the simple exposition of the *controversiae* might suggest.[15] Indeed, it is precisely in this effort that his audience judged him. Fathers and senators on school open-house days and in their own recreational declamation did not have to listen for the plot, since they knew it already. And it is precisely this preexisting knowledge of the tales of declamation that gave audiences

[12] D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge, 1983), 87.

[13] Ong, *Orality and Literacy*, 23, 41–42 (limited repertoire of combinable themes); 69–71 (striking characters and fabulous action).

[14] J. M. Foley, *The Theory of Oral Composition: History and Methodology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1988), 43.

[15] See J. M. Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1991), 7; 33–37.

of declamation, like audiences of oral poetry, the ability to judge such oral compositions. They knew the story before the speaker began and thus had the opportunity to listen for the speaker's stylistic rhetorical innovations.[16] Like type-scenes in Homer, then, *controversiae* provide the opportunity to see in more detail how the oral performances, the declamations themselves, were crafted by their composers and received by their audiences.

The titles used in the declamatory texts also betray features of oral composition. Every *controversia* has a compressed and somewhat racy title that refers to a character or his actions. Dingel has compared these titles to newspaper headlines.[17] In *Declamatio Minor* 354 (Appendix, #4b), the title is actually a portentous line of dialogue attributed to a mother charged with poisoning her daughter after the daughter is betrothed to her mother's lover: "Morietur antequam nubat,"—"She will die before she marries." It is interesting to note that this particular *controversia* also appears in the Elder Seneca and Calpurnius Flaccus under the title "Adultera venefica," or "The Adulteress Who Was a Poisoner." The treatment of *controversiae* in theoretical texts like Quintilian and the *Rhetores Latines Minores* indicates how the titles for these texts may have been derived. In the rhetorical texts *controversiae* are usually introduced with formulae like *ut in illa* or *ut in illo*, followed by a concise description of the facts of the *controversia.*[18] If we translate the formula, "the one about," we can hear how the titles were used. "Tomorrow, boys, we shall do the one about the brave stepson who was drugged," a teacher might advise his students. Or a friend of the Elder Seneca might turn to his guests at a recreational declaiming session and suggest, "Let us start with the one about the adulteress who was a poisoner."

The Practices of Declamation

If we think of *controversiae* as problems intended to prompt oral performance, I think we can better understand the pedagogical and recreational practices of declamation in Rome at the end of the

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[16] See J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History* (Madison, 1985), 35, 71–79.

[17] Dingel, *Scholastica Materia*, 17–20.

[18] See, for example, Quintilian, *Institutio* 10.5.104, "ut in illo adultero sacerdote;" Iulius Victor (Halm, 1863) 376.33–37 ("ut est illa"); 272.33 ("huic supponit exemplum"); 333.33 ("qualis est controversia").

Republic and during the early Principate. Roman teachers of rhetoric assigned their students homework problems which consisted of *controversiae*. As we have seen, the actual "cases" for which the boys prepared declamations were often wildly improbable, arising out of the activities of tyrants, pirates, wicked stepmothers, dissolute sons and, on occasion, ghosts. Scholars of education since Quintilian have deplored the pedagogy. How could this exercise possibly prepare a Roman boy to become an *advocatus* or *orator*?

First, it should be noted that the earliest Roman rhetorical writings, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and Cicero's *de Inventione*, refer to *controversiae* that are far more specific in their references to contemporary Roman legal practice and disputes.[19] At least by the time of the Elder Seneca, however, the *controversiae* came to be exclusively dominated by fabulous themes.[20] There were good, practical reasons why teachers might prefer the unreal to the topical.

Obviously topical *controversiae* would quickly become obsolete. Teachers who practised in municipal centers far from Rome, moreover, would probably find *controversiae* attuned to the immediate political and legal concerns of Rome laborious to explain.[21] Teachers, moreover, would have to have been brave indeed to risk offering declamations on their open-house days that demanded comparison between their own performance and that of their students' fathers. In the first century B.C.E., it should be remembered, these *rhetores* were freedmen and foreigners seeking to establish an institution to which members of the Roman elite from Cato the Elder to the censors of 92 B.C.E. (who officially proclaimed their displeasure with the schools of the Latin Rhetors by edict) had expressed a fair degree of hostility.[22] A teacher's performance of declamations about pirates

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[19] Quintilian *Inst.* 2.4.41–42; Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 25.5; see A. Manfredini, "L'Editto de Coercendis Rhetoribus Latinis del 92 A.C." *Studia et Documenta Historiae et Iuris* 42 (1976): 146–47; E. Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic* (London, 1985) 120; 148–49.

[20] S. F. Bonner, *Roman Declamation* (Berkeley, 1949), 23–25.

[21] Bonner, *Roman Declamation*, 137.

[22] In 161 B.C.E. the Senate ordered the praetor M. Pomponius to expel philosophers and rhetors from Rome, Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 25.2. See G. Garbarino, *Roma e la Filosofia greca dalle Origini alle Fine del II Secolo A.C.* (Torino, 1973), 2:370, 379; E. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Leiden, 1990), 179–92. Cato urged the Senate to finish its business with the "philosophical" embassy of 155 (one ambassador of which, Carneides, had delighted the Roman youth with a speech for and against justice on successive days) lest the rhetorical displays of the Greek

and wicked stepmothers, like those collected in the *Declamationes Maiores*, demonstrated his rhetorical proficiency, but marked his expertise as ludic.[23] The *rhetor* who declaimed about enchanted tombs and tortured sons was no threat to the forensic authority of his students' fathers.[24] The generalized, romantic themes of declamation, moreover, would have been easily recalled by parents who sat as judges of their former masters at open-house days.

Thus, by the Elder Seneca's day, if not earlier, teachers had developed a repertoire of *controversiae* based on a limited number of combinable themes featuring striking, if stock, characters and memorable deeds and actions. The repertoire was portable and usable in virtually any part of the Roman empire to which a *rhetor* might journey. Texts like Pseudo-Quintilian's *Declamationes Minores* were teachers' handbooks, aides-mémoire that contained the *controversiae*, and noted the best way to use each *controversia* to teach a particular point of rhetorical theory. The titles, easily drawn from the texts of the *controversiae* themselves, made individual standards easy to find as a *rhetor* rolled through a scroll when planning a class.

The *rhetores* then, had reason to prefer the unrealistic themes of the *controversiae*, but we might still ask why Roman parents paid good money to have their sons master the art of defending fictional slayers of tyrants. The simple answer is that it ensured that they would become Roman. The critics of declamation have focused on the practical relationship (or lack thereof) between declamation and law. If instead we focus on the ideological relationship between the *controversiae* and the actual process of composing a declamation, through the lens of recent work on oral traditions, we will find that declamatory

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ambassadors corrupt the youth of Rome, Plutarch *Cato Mai.* 22.2. In 92 B.C.E., the censors Crassus and Ahenobarbus (who agreed on nothing else during their term of office) issued the Latin Rhetors Edict announcing their stern displeasure with the new rhetorical schools of the Latin Rhetors, Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 25.2, Cicero *de Or.* 3.93–94. See Manfredini, "L'Editto;" G. Calboli, "M. Antonio e la 'Rhetorica Ad Herennium'" *Giornale Italiano di Filologia* n.s., 3, no. 1 (1972): 136–38; Gruen, *Greek Culture and Roman Policy*; M. Gelzer, "Die angebliche politische Tendenz in der dem C. Herennius gewidmeten Rhetorik," in *Kleine Schriften*, ed. H. Strasburger and C. Meier (Wiesbaden, 1962), 1:211–221, 215; R. Kaster, *Suetonius*: de Grammaticis et Rhetoribus (Oxford, 1995), 274.

[23] See, for example, Appendix, #3.

[24] For the Roman tendency to contrast the artificial nature of the school (*ludus*) with real life, see T. Wiedemann, *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1989), 163–64. See also S. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* (Berkeley, 1977), 56–57.

pedagogy made a Roman boy a *vir bonus*, if not a technically proficient *advocatus*.[25]

Vir bonus is as ideologically freighted a term as one can hope to find. The *vir bonus* is the ideal Roman who possesses and displays all the values of Roman culture, or *Romanitas*. The student who would hope to be a *vir bonus* must imbibe Roman values and it is precisely these values that declamatory texts, as an oral tradition, preserve.[26] Jan Vansina argues that oral traditions are structured; that is, in the process of repetition and transmission over generations, "disconnected short items of recent information," are discarded, while narratives of definite patterns treating matters of social and cultural importance endure.[27] In other words, specific details like those Cicero recalled from his youthful declamations might be lost, but narrative patterns that reflected cultural values and conflicts would survive. The corpus of declamations, accordingly, reflects a "structured" narrative tradition in Rome. On any given day a *rhetor* could create and assign a *controversia* that referred to a contemporary political crisis or legal dispute. Such a *controversia* was unlikely to survive in the corpus of declamations, to be borrowed by and handed down to other teachers, if it did not also explore core issues of *Romanitas*. If the *controversia* did explore these issues and thus survive, its original details and topicality might nevertheless disappear from the tradition over time.

The nature of the issues of *Romanitas* explored by the *controversiae* becomes apparent when one recognizes that the overwhelming majority of *controversiae* center on a conflict of allegiance between two social roles inhabited by one character. In example *Declamatio Minor* 277 (Appendix, #2), for example, the hero is forced to choose between his obligations as potential father and betrayed husband. In *Declamatio Maior* 10 (Appendix, #3), a woman's loyalty to the memory of her dead son is in conflict with her devotion to her still-living husband. In excerpt 31 of Calpurnius Flaccus (Appendix, #4a), a son's affection for his mother challenges his loyalty to his father. These conflicts, moreover, are irresolvable. Declamation, unlike comedy, the plots of

[25] As students of Roman rhetoric have observed since Cato, the Roman orator must first be a *vir bonus*. Elder Seneca, *Controversiae* 1 pr. 9 (Winterbottom, *Elder Seneca*, 1:8–11): "Ille ergo vir quid ait? 'Orator est, Marce filii, vir bonus dicendi peritus." Quintilian, *Inst.* 1 pr. 9: "Oratorem autem instituimus illum perfectum, qui esse nisi vir bonus non potest. . . ."

[26] J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, 105–106.

[27] J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, 165–73.

which share many of the features of the *controversiae*, insists on a choice with tragic consequences. If a son values his father over his mother, his mother must die. If he values his mother over his father, his family's honor is lost.

The very process of composing a declamation forced the student declaimer to learn Roman values and the contradictions between them. The *controversiae* do not spell out causality or liability. In *Declamatio Minor* 246 (Appendix, #1), for example, the *controversia* does not tell us that the stepmother deliberately made a sleeping potion, intending to put her stepson out of commission for the battle. It is even possible to construct an argument based on these facts that she had made a mild preparation because the boy was so anxious that she feared that he would not sleep well and hence would not fight well in battle. The successful declaimer was required to appeal to an authority outside the confines of the *controversia* to establish the stepmother's liability.

He did so by emphasizing that she is a stepmother. Never in the *controversiae*, but everywhere in declamation, archetypal figures like the wicked stepmother abound. It is to these figures that declaimers appeal for the logic of their arguments. Everyone knows that stepmothers hate their stepsons and that they frequently try to seduce or kill them. Similarly, tyrants always send down to the city for virgins to rape, and always order slaves to kill their masters. Rich men ever seek to destroy poor men. Dissolute sons are ever siring children with prostitutes and dying, leaving benighted fathers and brothers to sort out the social status of such dubious progeny. These archetypes, moreover, are frequently polarized. A married woman in the world of declamation will either be wicked—an adulterous wife or stepmother—or an angel, long suffering in her devotion to her ungrateful husband and sons. A powerful man, a tyrant or rich man, will either abuse the authority of his status and power, or he will dutifully serve the state as a war hero, a *vir fortis*, and struggle bravely to protect his wife, sons and daughters from the depredations of tyrants and *raptores*.

The archetypal figures of declamation exist only in oral performance. The *controversiae* do not explicitly link stereotypical traits with stock characters. The rhetorical theorists like Quintilian do not examine this link. Instead these links were assumed. They were part of the stock of cultural knowledge that every *vir bonus* possessed. As St. Jerome observed, "all the comedies and mimes and commonplaces

declaimed against the wicked stepmother."[28] Roman boys acquired this knowledge, in part, at the school. This knowledge, however, was not simply for Roman boys.

Roman *rhetores* frequently held "open-house" days at which students performed their declamations in front of an audience of proud fathers and important political and social figures.[29] The *rhetor's* open-house was a place in which to see and be seen in Rome of the late Republic and Principate, a place for members of the Roman elite from Cicero to Tiberius to meet, greet and occasionally compete.[30] Roman fathers, moreover, did not merely enjoy declamation as a semi-public, performative event. At least during the Julio-Claudian era, as the Elder Seneca documents, declamation was also a private, recreational pastime of Rome's elite.[31] Rather than discuss the price of real estate or the fortunes of professional athletes, Roman magnates like Asinius Pollio, Cassius Severus and Votienus Montanus would declaim the *controversiae* of their school days as a form of relaxation.[32] While this may strike a modern as an unenviable way to spend an evening, Seneca and his contemporaries were pursuing a social practice established at least by the time of Cicero and Antony.[33] The persistence of declamation as an activity beyond the confines of the school should indicate to us not the oddity of declamation, but rather its importance to Romans. Declamation was important because it taught Roman values to Roman boys in a particularly effective way.

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[28] St. Jerome, *Ep.* 54.15.4.

[29] See, for example, Suetonius' description of Gnipho's "open-house" on market days. Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 10.

[30] Cicero's attendance at Gnipho's open-house during his praetorship, Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 7. Under the Principate, senators attended and declaimed at school open-house days (Aetius Pius and Quintus Haterius: Seneca, *Controversiae* 1.3.11 and 1.6.12). Members of the imperial family and their close connections also attended school open-house days (Augustus, Seneca, *Controversiae*, 2.4.12, 10.5.2; Tiberius, Seneca, *Suasoriae* 3.7; Maecenas and Agrippa, Seneca, *Controversiae* 2.4.12). Nero not merely attended, but also declaimed, Suetonius, *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 25; *Nero* 10.

[31] See M. Winterbottom, *Elder Seneca*, xiii–xiv.

[32] See, for example, Seneca, *Controversiae* 4 pr. 4–5 (Asinius Pollio), 7.3.10 (Cassius Severus) and 9.1.3 (Votienus Montanus).

[33] For Cicero's private declamation, see Seneca, *Controversiae* 1 pr. 11; Suetonius, *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 1; Cicero *ad Att.* 14.11.2, 14.12.2, 14.20.4, 14.22.1; *ad Fam.* 9.16.7, 9.9.18; *de Fato* 2; Quintillian *Inst.* 12.11.6. For Antony, see Cicero's caustic description of Antony's preparations to respond to the *First Philippic* by declaiming with his friend and favorite, the *rhetor* Sextus Clodius, Cicero *Phil.* 2.42–43, 67), cf. Suetonius *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 29.

The job of the student declaimer was to assimilate the conduct of the stock characters described in the *controversiae* to the behavioral characteristics associated with the archetypal figures. He concentrated not on plot, but on motive, and in particular on witty *sententiae* in which he neatly linked the bland fact of a particular *controversia* to the notorious archetypes of declamation. In doing so, repeatedly, for several years, the student of declamation not merely mastered these archetypal figures and the status and gender traits associated with them, but also he added to and enriched the imaginative power of these archetypes with his own *sententiae*. Students were rewarded for finding the wittiest way to say that good women were silent and devoted to their husbands and sons; that sons appropriately obeyed their fathers absolutely; that fathers must temper their authority with affection and generosity; that Roman divisions of gender, class and status naturally and absolutely divided society into a hierarchy of power at the apex of which stood the *vir bonus* the student would one day become.[34]

Kevin Robb's analysis of the role of recitation and performance in archaic Greek education makes an instructive *comparandum* to the Roman practice of declamation. For Robb, the Greek pedagogical technique of requiring students to recite passages of epic poetry was one of mimetic "enculturation." The student did not simply read aloud about Herakles, but rather imitated him and other figures of epic carefully chosen for the moral values linked to their identities.[35] In an analogous fashion, Roman students at school, and their fathers in recreation, similarly performed and thus imitated stock figures of an oral tradition. But unlike the Greek model of *paideia* described by Robb, the student of declamation did not simply learn passively at school the minutiae of Roman social values, their complexities and contradictions. Rather, his education was dynamic and interactive.

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[34] Cf. P. Brown, *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity: Towards a Christian Empire* (Madison, 1992), 48–58 and R. Kaster, *Guardians of the Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1984), 19 on rhetorical education as a means of inculcating moral and social values in the sons of the Roman elite, who were otherwise quite unconstrained in their exercise of considerable personal power. See also Kevin Robb's discussion of the didactic function of Homeric poetry in Greek culture: "In a word, Homeric speech conveyed the proper mores of class behavior, especially as those classes related to each other." Kevin Robb, *Literacy and Paideia in Ancient Greece* (New York and Oxford, 1994), 165.

[35] Robb, *Literacy and Paideia*, 166–68; 173–78; 185–88; 192–97; 217–27.

Student declaimers actively contributed to the ideological tradition that was itself shaping their own identities.

It is this ideological aspect of Roman rhetorical pedagogy that explains the endurance of declamation in the Roman school for centuries. Augustus, who invited the teacher Marcus Verrius Flaccus to move his school to the palace for the substantial salary of 100,000 sesterces a year, knew that the sons of the municipal aristocracy who studied with such teachers could claim a *Romanitas* as certain as that of Cato and the old Romans.[36] Time would make old Romans of the new elite soon enough. Declamation would make them Roman immediately.[37]

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[36] Suetonius, *de Gramm. et Rhet.* 17. Flaccus introduced the pedagogical technique of having students compete for prizes, ibid.

[37] I would like to thank the organizers of the 1998 Epos and Logos conference for the opportunity to give this paper (and for a delightful time) and the participants in the conference, and Lisa Maurizio, whose thoughtful comments helped improve the final version of this paper. I am especially indebted to Janet Watson for editorial advice and patience. I would also like to thank the Office of the Dean of Faculty of Bates College, and my eponymous and generous aunt, Mrs. Margaret Cavanaugh, through whose financial support I was able to participate in the conference.

1. The generic structure of Roman declamatory texts (Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamationes Minores* 246 [*The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian (Texte und Kommentar)*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Berlin, 1984)]). The *controversia* and part of the declamation are offered here.

Title: Soporatus fortis privignus
Laws: (none for this example)
Facts:

Qui fortiter fecerat, bello imminente, soporem ab noverca subiectum bibit. Causam dixit tamquam desertor. Absolutus accusat novercam veneficii.

Model Answer *(Declamatio)*:

Etiamsi, iudices, eventus proximae causae satis videri potest etiam in hanc quoque pronuntiasse, primum tamen doloris mei professionem dissimulare non possum, quod novercam ante accusare non potui. Debeo quidem sententiis iudicum omnia; homo tamen gravissimam iniuriam passus adhuc tantum absolutus sum. Verum me quamvis praecipue in hoc iudicium agat ultio ‡ talis illud quidem periculum fallit ‡hodie constituetis an merito absolutus sim. Inter summa discrimina rei publicae ‡non fuit venenum‡ * ego deserui. Si quid autem ad hanc praeteritorum indignationem adicere etiam forma ipsa iudicii potest, illud certe est quod nulla possit tolerare patientia, quod se mihi contendit noverca beneficium dedisse. Vos aestimabitis quid de persona hac sentiatis: non fecisset | hoc mater; certe, quod mihi satis est, pater non fecit.

Teacher's Comments *(Sermo)*:

Quotiens finiendum erit, primum intueri debebitis quid utraque pars velit, deinde id quod vult quam brevissime complecti. Quare negat venenum esse qui pro rea dicit? Quia non occiderit neque sit morti ferum. Quare dicit venenum esse qui accusat? Quoniam medicamentum sit et efficiat aliquid contra naturam. Ergo non est satis id modo videri venenum quod occidat, sed haec omnia venena sunt <quae *>. 'Ad tuam quidem finitionem etiam mortiferum istud erit: nam cum id ageres ut desererem, desertorem poena sequatur, etiam id quod deesse huic medicamento videbatur adieceras.'

Model Answer *(Declamatio)*:

Veneficii accuso. Veneficam dico quae soporem dedit. Unde tibi <in> hos usus venena? Notiora sunt quaedam pernicie et experimento deprehenduntur, adeo ut aliqua publice dentur. Hoc quid est? quid tu vis vocari? In tempus venenum, quo mens aufertur, quo corpus gravatur, quo membra solvuntur. Saepe in scelere virtutis est nosse veneni modum. . . .

– –

Title: A brave stepson has been drugged.
Laws: (none for this example)
Facts:

When a war was about to commence, a man who had acted bravely drank a sleeping potion offered by his stepmother. Accused of desertion he pled his case. Found innocent [of desertion] he accuses the stepmother of poisoning.

Model Answer *(Declamatio)*:

Although, gentlemen of the jury, the outcome of the recent lawsuit may generally be seen to have reached a decision on this case as well, nevertheless, above all, I cannot refrain from expressing my grief that I was not able to sue my stepmother earlier. Indeed, I owe everything to the votes of the jury. But yet, as a man, who has suffered the gravest injury, I have still only been acquitted. But, although revenge particularly motivates me in this lawsuit [text corrupt ~ a danger ~] today you will decide whether I was rightly declared innocent. At the state's moment of extreme danger [text corrupt †it was not a poison† . . .] I deserted. But even if the very nature of this trial can add anything to the insult from past events, this is certainly something which no-one could tolerate patiently, that my stepmother contends that she did me a favor. You will decide what you think about this character: a mother would not have done this; certainly, what is enough for me, my father did not do it.

Teacher's Comments *(Sermo)*:

Whenever there is a need of a definition, first you should examine what each side wants, and then you should cover what they want as succinctly as possible. Why does the lawyer who speaks for the defendant deny that it is a poison? Because the potion did not kill, and was not [inherently] fatal. Why does the plaintiff say that it is a poison? Since it is a drug and acts somehow contrary to nature. Therefore it is not enough that only what kills is thought a poison, but all those things are poisons which. . . . "Even by your definition it [the potion] will be deadly: for, when you brought it about that I deserted, and punishment follows desertion, you had added on even what this drug seemed to lack."

Model Answer *(Declamatio)*:

I accuse you of poisoning. I call the sleeping potion a poison. Where did you get these poisons for this purpose? Some poisons are better known for their destructive results and we have learned about them from experience to the extent that they are sometimes given in state executions. What is this one? What do you wish [it] to be called? It is a temporary poison which removes cognition, weighs down the body, and loosens the limbs. It is often a mark of skill in crime to know the right measure of poison. . . .

2. School *controversia* (Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamationes Minores* 277 [*The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian (Texte und Kommentar)*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Berlin, 1984)]).

Praegnas adultera
Supplicia praegnatium in diem partus differantur.
Praegnatem in adulterio deprehensam occidit maritus. Reus est caedis. CD.

– –

The Pregnant Adulteress
Let the punishments of pregnant women be deferred until the day of birth.
A husband kills his pregnant [wife] caught in the act of adultery. He is a defendant on a charge of murder. He speaks in opposition.

3. Professional *controversia* (Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamationes Maiores* 10 [L. A. Sussman, *The Major Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian: A Translation* (Frankfurt am Main, 1987)]).

Sepulcrum incantatum
Malae tractationis sit actio.
Quae amissum filium nocte videbat in somnis, indicavit marito. ille adhibito mago incantavit sepulcrum. mater desiit videre filium. accusat maritum malae tractationis.

– –

The Case of the Enchanted Tomb
One may bring suit for maltreatment.
A woman who kept seeing her dead son in her dreams at night revealed this to her husband. He, after consulting a sorcerer, cast a spell on the tomb. The mother ceased to see her son. She accuses her husband of maltreatment.

4. Examples of *controversiae* in adult declamation
a. Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamationum Excerpta* 31 (L. A. Sussman, *The Declamations of Calpurnius Flaccus: Text, Translation, and Commentary* [Leiden, 1994]).
Adulterae soror et mater
Et matres et sorores in adulterio deprehensas liceat occidere.
Quidam cum sororem deprehendisset, occidit. furorem passus resipiit. invenit et matrem. non occidit. abdicatur a patre.

– –

The Mother and Sister Who Committed Adultery
One may kill both mothers and sisters caught in adultery.
When a certain man caught his sister in the act, he killed her. After suffering from insanity, he came to his senses again. He also discovered his mother in the act. He did not kill her. He is disinherited by his father.

b. Elder Seneca, *Controversiae* 6.6 (M. Winterbottom, ed. *The Elder Seneca: Declamations*. [Cambridge Mass., 1974]). [= Pseudo Quintilian, *Declamationes Minores* 354; Calpurnius Flaccus, *Declamationum Excerpta* 40].

Adultera Venefica
Veneficii sit actio.
Quidam, cum haberet uxorem et ex ea filiam nubilem, indicavit uxori, cui eam conlocaturus esset. illa dixit: celerius morietur quam illi nubat. decessit puella ante diem nuptiarum, dubiis signis crudelitatis et veneni. torsit ancillam pater; dixit illa nihil se scire de veneno, sed de adulterio dominae et eius, cui conlocaturus filiam erat. accusat uxorem veneficii et adulterii.

– –

The Adulteress Who Was a Poisoner
An action may lie for poisoning.
A man with a wife and by her a marriageable daughter, told his wife to whom he proposed to marry their daughter. She said: "She will die sooner than marry him." The girl died before the wedding day, with possible symptoms of mistreatment and poisoning. The father tortured a slave girl who said she knew nothing of poison but was aware of an affair between her mistress and the man to whom he had proposed to marry his daughter. He accuses his wife of poisoning and adultery.

5. Repetition of action (Pseudo-Quintilian, *Declamationes Minores* 300 [*The Minor Declamations Ascribed to Quintilian (Texte und Kommentar)*, ed. M. Winterbottom (Berlin, 1984)]).
Adultera apud filium iudicem rea
Apud communem filium iudicem ream adulterii fecit maritus uxorem. Matrem absolvit adulescens. Pater eandem detulit in iudicium publicum et damnavit. Abdicat filium.

– –

The Adulteress Who Was a Defendant in her Son's Court
A husband named his wife as defendant on a charge of adultery [in a private, family trial] in which their common son was judge. The youth found the mother not guilty. The father sued her in a public court and prevailed. He disinherits the son.

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